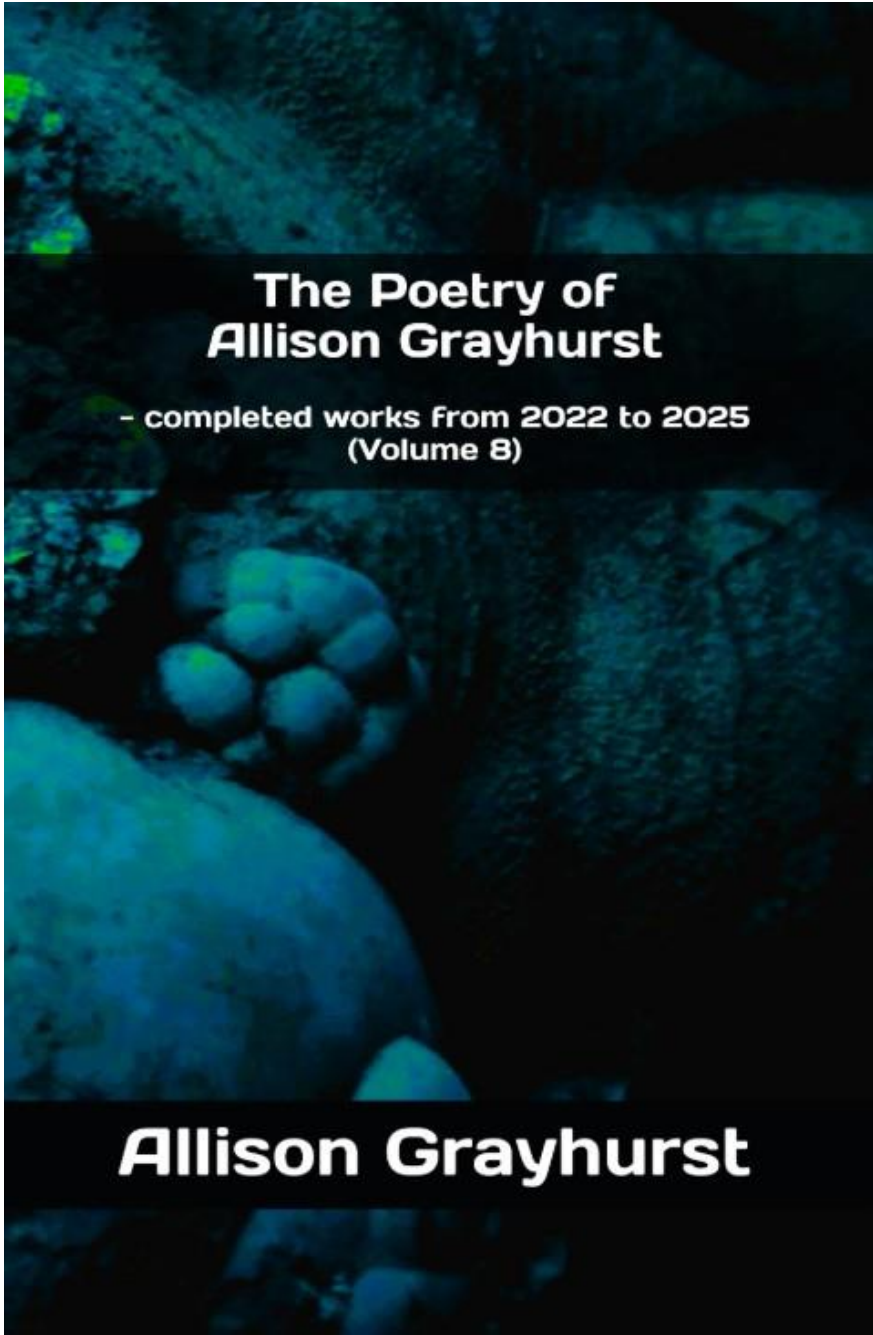




The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

**- completed works from 2022 to 2025
(Volume 8)**

Allison Grayhurst

*The Poetry of Allison
Grayhurst - completed works from
2022 to 2025
(Volume 8)*

*A Wish Alone
The Light Given
The Sparrow Wars*

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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- completed works from 2022 to 2025 (Volume 8)
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A Wish Alone

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Egg

Periwinkle garden,
flowers folded
into a dumpling.

I sit on the bottom floor
of a blessing
before it builds and blooms,
before its face has distinction,
expression, perfect individuality.

Low ache of forming,
wandering cold plains, over icy lakes
through dead forests and caves.

Almost ripe,
platelets connecting, composing
a singular solid substance. Then

out of the egg and into the vast ocean,
forward, shell collapsing, imploding, out
free-riding, embodying
a fully sufficient infant form.

Darkness

**Darkness heavy as a hunter's
footsteps, as a sermon
up the sleeve, offered like
a ripe strawberry covered in ants.**

**Darkness like the green
on a last slice of bread
or the dome of pollution that mutes
Earth from the zodiac hymns.**

**Darkness that binds
thumbtacks to the temples,
dirty as a campfire after the fire
or a marriage after infidelity.**

**Darkness as a shell, hardness
masquerading as strength, terrors
of complexities, moral confusion
and the allotment of grief that mushrooms
in tiny pockets here, here, until all greenery
is overcome with fungi.**

**Darkness that holds no peace,
no joy in just breathing,
makes up myths and ceremonies
to try to blast out
the darkness, flaking at the core.**

**Darkness I am done with your engulfing disease,
your canopy wings, trickery, making me believe
there is rest and safety in your shade.
I lay down my fossils and my weeping.**

**Darkness, I blow you over
and when I am blown over,
I will offer no resistance.**

Resilience

**Violet-hue star of mighty purity,
a fixed point, directly overhead, anointing,
a release from the symbiotic purgatory-fold,
from the loop fire enduring coil
and the billowing dead land once before me.**

**I will build a bonfire and dance
under this eight-billion-year-old star,
no longer held hostage by what I know,
inevitable observations, time turned to stone,
locked in one position, dammed to have no meaning,
no longer trapped in a rippling tremble, continuous
and static state.**

**I will lean into this bright gathering,
translating the bursting floral mastery
of endless constellations, keeping my height,
keeping my mind, ready to engage
in a divine exchange, discourse.**

Declaration

**The declaration came,
ground-breaking, significant
to every aspect of my nature.
At stake is the stability
of my core symbolism, the root
and the fruit combined.**

**What matters is this day
to walk the wooden floors,
replenish my joy
in the simple things of duty and care,
opening to the embrace
of alternate thought patterns,
pursuing the paradox,
digging out its centre for a braver scenario
to catch and be malleable with, kneading
and knowing the vision will form,
overtake and dissolve superfluous
dreams and attachments until it
pulses like an embryo
forming, being formed
readying for
exposure.**

Fish

**I saw a fish in sleep
beneath a curly wave
dreaming in a prophet-trance,
its lips and fins relaxed, no resistance
against the water's sway.**

**Some say the fish was dead,
but I could see its eyes enflamed,
traveling deep in a vision unnamed into
crevices of underwater caves, finding
peace in a pitch-black reverie.**

**I cupped that fish inside my hand
and still it did not move, continuing its
placid ephemeral journey,
now journeying into the sky,
able to breathe, transitioning
into flight and becoming intimate
with the sun's heat like never before.**

**That fish was so far gone
into a state of transcendence as
I released it back into its salty wet home,
kissing it forehead first.**

**I felt it absorb my love
under its scales, floating away from me,
silver and white.**

**Tranquil, in steady rapture,
I watched it vanish as it rolled
across and under the oceans' blanket,
as though it never was.**

Chain

**The chain is cracked, only
a small tug will break it
and the wall will let down its curtain,
the leech will release its hold, find
a new host or none at all.**

**I empty my heat on the bed
toss with disorder, too slow on my feet.
But even so, I am carving a future
I can get behind, lift myself onto a plateau
that has many plateaus above it, sure of my growing
strength. It is possible to keep my internal
promises, not like before when the dirty current
rippled through me like a disease,
threatening, consuming
my substance and storages.**

**Can I say the chain is rusted,
dissolving, no access
to its binding power?
I go for walks. I am grateful
for the open door, one step
forward.**

Child

The child twists a ringlet,
runs to the shops to buy
candy, rides her bike
by the river and assembles
a dream-world, bigger world
than her whole reality.

The child found worship in her heart
for God and love
for an infant raccoon alone under a tree,
talked to herself incessantly, and often,
she talked to God, and to his son, Jesus.

She went to school, but chalked it up
to unimportant servitude, felt joyful
and free, plucking the autumn leaves,
engaging with the neighbour's dog.

The child was wild, swinging
from willow branches, throwing stones,
skipping stones, toes always at the edge
of the unsettled river.

Cats were her guardians, confidants and kin.
Church was boredom, except for the one place
where the light was let in, that place
took over her full imagination
as she traveled through and into
an instinctual reverie.

The child loved her family,
was allowed every independence,
was ostracized by the other children
for her crocheted clothes and the colour
of her flaming hair. Some called her witch,
others, an atrocity, and the grown-ups, beautiful.

**The child rode horses when she got older,
wrote down the songs of clouds and the names of
the crows that would follow her, converse with her
from the school bus window.**

**The child found her belonging in her own head,
with the animals, and sometimes, she remembers,
walking silently, holding the hand of a great angel.**

Running, lightwave riding

Keeping a holy flame
close to my chest, in the mornings,
deep in the base-line sleep
I throw a stone sideways - many pipes
are broken, hearts clogged with
despair, disappointments and dreams
of eternal dreams.

Answers start up like old machines,
make noise, but cannot be useful or join
a continuous flow.
Depleted bank accounts, rough-shod carpets
and rotting wooden subfloors – all of this is the same,
but what isn't is how I kiss high above,
feel myself and all who I love, cradled
in divine tenderness.

Do you know love, that kind of love?
It is better than smooth skin, soft fur,
or a year away on Spanish shores.
It is dangerous because it is all that is left,
and in that lofty beauty, all else is
forfeit that doesn't match its wonder,
simplicity, discipline.

It has to be surrender.
It has to be in this world
of chaos, unpredictable danger
and mishaps.
It is about connections,
fumes over the swamp, fledglings left alone
to die in the too-hot sun, and
waterholes gone unreplenished.

**It is always this fear, this faith as one,
balancing, illuminated, filling up with pressure
then taking in every blessing,
the singularity of life, senseless conditions,
steel-bar limitation, pleading while satisfied,
longing while fulfilled, coat off, shoes off -
toe bent and broken, glad to still be able
to walk, to climb a chair, clean a home
and ask myself - is this freedom?**

Sinkhole

**The rain rolls down and
acidifies the flowers.**

**A month of teetering over the abyss,
barely standing, panicked with
your unnatural lack of strength
and your anger, your soft special
nakedness, needing to get off
the steep slope, find a resting log, feel
that you can defeat this gravity pull, break
the shade around your mind and waterproof
your walls.**

**How can it be so hard?
So quickly the eclipse came and covered,
thinning your resilience. The moment the cloud
loses balance, it descends from the sky.
The condition is stark, helpless
words and prayers rot beside it like cabbage
left too long in the sun.**

**My love cannot save you,
never leaves a mark. Only
waiting now for the medication
to kick in, for your psychological
equilibrium to be restored -
holding hands across the sofa.**

**I would hold the whole of your pain
if I could, hold and pull you
from the weighted mass, sinking.**

**There is nothing. Watching your eyes
not your eyes - both us trying with all our wisdom
and might but nothing shifts. A vacuum,
inhospitable to miracles or mercy.**

**O God please give him green, let the tall grass
brush across his limbs, let your angels gather, electrify
his inner current, reviving, opening a path to
his immaculate freedom.
Let him stand again.
His dreams are authentic
and still burning.**

Unharmmed

Silent as a predator
on the far side of a hill
nearing, reality inches closer,
hungry and stealth.

Days inside a half-grown dream
nurturing this ideal that is unable
to fully mature and tower.

This hallway fills with sludge,
that hallway with toxic fumes,
and another with mealy worms searching
for a host to infest and consume.

If I stand still none will take me
but movement happens without my accord,
time decides, aligns everything to its filthy trade.

I see with one eye - linear. I can hope but
my hope is made of straw. I can grow, but in
growing I condemn myself even more when again
I will be trapped and reduced.

I can burst through in my mind.
In my mind, I can leave these ruins,
take flight, take shelter,
wilt the taste of defeat,
cover the lamp and pretend I hear
soft chords, harmonies
converging.

Loss

**There, the cement
is broken by a heavy fall,
ants make their way in,
dig tunnels, weeds sprout up
and birds land.**

**Beginnings are ugly, born out of death,
harsh endings and spoonfuls of stone and flame.
Even the perfect, soft, love-filled endings
are brutal in their permanence.**

**I drown in the shallow stream.
I make music in the desert.
I touch the worms of my thoughts,
wagging and whipping up the smooth level below.**

**Do you know how much I miss you -
the light in your dark special eyes,
the light that seeped into and saturated
wherever you went, and the natural love
pooling around your small body,
extending into the corners of this house,
upstairs, down basement stairs,
all the empty places?**

Harvest

**Cry out -
the light is golden,
simple, with no secrets,
no detours of conniving depths
to trap the soul in a maze made of concrete
where no seed can root or sprout.
What was promised was always
the light, needed only
to be believed to be true.**

**Mortal dreams
Mortal spinal cords
and hopes that press like
the edge of a sword against
your soft belly.
Mortal light that gets
turned off and on again
by a switch or a changing season
is not the light of blanketing glory,
is not mercy in the pit.**

**Take this point in the fault line,
stand on it as it splits the crust
and everything below.
Here the light grows
like words inked on your skin,
cutting into the meat of your organs.
It is light like no brightness you have every known,
a golden penetrating, undiluted glow.**

The Final Despair

**Reaching the madness of failure
plugged like a mouth stuffed
with a sponge, unable to express
the agony experienced with a outward scream -
curved under pressure to turn in the direction back,
circular damnation. Gifts of grace,
pillaged and gone up in smoke.**

**A child's every breath was my breath,
joy as yellow as the sun - years of happiness
that meant love was working, that the
mutilated and hanging seekers
had nothing up their sleeves to defeat such truth.
But now,**

**my heart is small, barely beating.
My horse is burning,
racing the fields.
My hopes are maimed,
crushed by senselessness,
helplessness and the feeling
that O - there must be switch,
if I could just find it and lift and set
things aright. But my prayers
billow into the air, head for the abyss.**

**I doubt everything and bottom out
in that emptiness, moving mechanical,
tethered to a trusted routine,
happy only in the peace
of a morning's solitude.**

Sparrow

**I see the spider dance, smoke
dancing on the edge of a scream.
I am that spider
dancing as I continue downstream.
Can I be a tree or a curvy vine?
Can I grow a cloud or just one
bulb flower?
Fated to be broken like all else
living on the Earth, soiled, striving, but always incomplete.
Can I trust enough to win back my soul?
Be immersed in the fog and still know the way?**

**My keeper, my mid-summer garden,
the bull shark is coming with the encroaching wave,
swimming will not be enough, not a floaty, not a raft
will stave off its violent power.
I will need something larger to fit on, something absolute
to cull this danger, an island on its own, a hand,
blessed and strong to raise me from the inevitable grave.**

**Your love is all I have ever known
when I know love. Pick me up with the rest of
the laundry you plan to clean - make light work of me,
set me down folded, refreshed,
ready to be worn. I am prepared to live
and I don't want to die
like a rusted vent, my metal
slowly corroding, crumbling until I am left without
grace, usefulness or substance. I don't want to walk
into the darkness again - the hollow of all hollows,
wailing with pain and rage and nakedness
in the burning coal fires.**

**I am your child. I am your sparrow, please
open the cage-latch, cup me as your own -
then let me go, and my freedom
will give you joy, will give you glory.**

End of the Line

**Consumed like a passion
that exceeds its limited energy,
like a sorrow when anger
gets a foothold.
my anger tightens, incapable
of finding culmination or the subsiding
soothing aftermath of shame or reason.**

**Around the circle, banishment from joy
and movement, the scattering of dead seeds.**

**Through the circle, a chance to develop,
foster trust in the goodness presenting,
to rest my head, release the futile struggle
and devote my intelligence
to examining this foreign peace.**

**But the ladder has demolished,
and I cannot climb without it
or travel the same path, going around.
I will not withstand being chained again
to such an unrelenting foe,
wearing this false face
fated to merge with and shadow
my own.**

Choice

I swayed and found fire
on my backside, in my insides,
quaking, cracking the edges and the surfaces,
melting the dream that sustained me.

Down the slide, there can be no laws but the law
of commitment to love, to making up for winter
by honouring the snow and days of hibernation.

Though I have been broken
like a broken dolphin's fin,
I find hope, in the piled-up books
I plan to read, on the peninsula I leap onto,
leap while I am sinking, leap
from one ledge to another, leap
for summer is ending and I refuse to go with it.
I refuse to sway, joyless, no music.

I hope

**Then they took what
was mine to keep
and I tossed like a broken-winged bird
trying to gain elevation.
I am in the land of bright and golden limbo
and I am listening.
Is it courage I need or a miracle
that will arrive like a true and lasting foundation?
I am hoping to pass through these
narrow corridors once and for all,
significant, conquering, not forsaken.
I am hoping for a buffer zone, for a hand
to help and make my climb out that much easier.
I hope to say thank you,
all traces of decay are gone,
to build something beautiful
not side-by-side an equally growing intolerable loss.
I hope to gather myself, seal all the holes,
see what it will feel like to lose
my rage, my despair, exiled
no more.**

Now

When will it be?

**The white bird says now,
the backyard sleepers, eaters,
say now
and the souls that left
and the souls that arrived
are deep in the immediacy
of an overpowering change
that will guide the current into the sea,
a coral reef barrier prosperity
a summer like a summer never
before - blessed, pulsing with an infant
eternal song, glorifying the dissolving shapes,
the empty spaces now made complimentary,
now made into a rippling harmony singing.**

When will it be?

It is, says the voice.

**Close your eyes. Open them
and see.**

Cure

**Joy is but a minstrel's flower,
lightening under the thumbnails.
Preach of mud around the eyes,
myself a centipede, fast but fragile.
I gaze and I know the way is a path is a dream
of a hawk landing and inside that dream
anguish quickens to gold, despair into
overcoming. Inside that dream, Jesus stands
insistent in a child's purity, burdenless, fresh
as the sun always is and always burning.**

**A tiny stone that cannot break, a love so graced
it welcomes the flooding tide. But I am broken,
eaten in tiny increments by the changing mirror -
around the evenings, around the first day's light,
blind to all but the persistent churning.**

**Jesus' great love has left me weeping,
suffering mended, miracles under
a white desert sky, offering a gift
seemingly small, unassuming,
but full enough to prevent heartache's
lasting damage.**

Someone other

**Someone said - “Be sensible,
a song is essential only if it can be traded.”
Someone squandered decades of rich meaning
then died on the rafters of an abandoned ballpark.**

**Intellectual dreams have no limitations,
strong in complexity, strong without drama
or disappointments.
I will dream intellectual, taste desire
as an idea, be friends with the professional
and marry into a profession.
How much time does it take to fashion an identity,
keep it with solid sides and a resistant core?**

**Someone said - “Don’t bother
nothing is for keeps, ideals exist
until they inevitably become soiled and then
start reeking of their opposite intent.”
Many years seized you up in spasms,
aching and making
a mockery of such extremes.
This planet is overstrained, never a gentle
day of just sitting.
Someone said - “Learn mediocrity
if you want happiness.”
Faith must be fought for, in every choice,
in the mid-days of winter and when
love has gone astray.**

**Someone said - “Deal with the collapse of
what you hold as true - contemplate it like a cloud
that shifts form and wisps away.”**

**I heard that someone, but the joy of love
is real even when it lies flattened. Hope
is not for the faint-hearted, but for the persistent,
the reformers of gravity, the warriors against inertia.
I say - Hope void of illusions
draws its first breath as faith
only in the purity of complete darkness.**

Inheritance

**The end is almost here,
rises like a blessing
like a storm, demanding
my commitment,
to go inside, hide and pray.**

**The end overthrows
the engrained pattern, arrests
the spread of illness and holds
the future like a tiny turtle in an egg,
struggling out of its shell.**

**The end is an escape route, a mind
losing consciousness, asking to be caught
before the body lands on unpolished
concrete floors, deprived of a buffer, asking
for a soft act of grace, a reminder
that love exists even under the executioner's hood.**

**The end is happening like forgiveness happens,
a miracle stronger than duty and grief,
strongest of all efforts -
a clean slate, consolidating
each action, blanketing over
every direction
to and away from home.**

Reformation

**I am tackling my circumstances
void of myth or the fallacy
of wishes.**

**I am trying to see straight even
if I must murder my own liberty,
harpoon my freedom and go under.**

**I see the road but I cannot
take the road if it leaves my loved ones
in jeopardy - parachute strings cut, plane
door open at high altitude.**

**I must go back, ache all over, unable
to sleep or find a resting position
without pain. Unless**

**supplies arrive, compassion comes and strips me
of this brutal incremental starvation and I can
stand unencumbered by such a load, unashamed
of my joy - no void of doom slicing through
my budding strength.**

My Cup

**Dream the light that blazes
over the arch of time.
Plunge in and peel.
Now. You are here.
There is no path, but the path
of intensity, trusting,
even when you fail.
Shave off the matts, the baggage of loss
that has outlived its necessity.
Step on the grass. Reach. Know you are
on the other side.
The past and its broken greenhouse
cracked walls, yellowed stems, rotted leaves
are of another country.
No loss was unbearable.
Torment has transformed,
has been set right and matured.
Happiness is a horse.
She stands before you, offers you a ride.
Be brave as a confident child,
feet off the ground,
in union, in flight.**

Submit

**When
submission to reality
is an example of good
behavior, and submission
to God, an example of
lunacy. What do I choose?
Can I choose or must I dive
back into the sludge-pool, struggling to
surface and keep the stench from moving in,
being absorbed?**

**Rage that takes me on a round-about,
adopting a slice of indignation coupled with
the exhausting sigh of failure.
Is this my path? I have tried
for a quarter of a century to brave it, be my best self
in it, and it works for a while, but never for long,
never before long when it ties me to its destruction,
grows things inside of me I cannot eradicate or soothe.**

**It can't be another year without mercy,
another conviction, revelation
dashed to shards against the wall.
I can't be another lost cause,
my entrapment a burden to all
who love me, where I am given two options
- hide my suffering or spread it -
no relief for me, harming my loved ones
with my vile and personal conundrum.**

**I can't make it another day, flat out
giving myself over to this wretched occupation.
I will die tomorrow if I continue on,
split against
this unmovable rock.**

I saw the Face

**I see what I take
and I circle back
to give
nourishment into the stream,
wisdom of a kind that is just
thought, intention and striving.**

**Gaining mortal burdens, feelings
that last lifetimes, failures that
embed in the body like a blackhole
and draw everything into a calamity
of despair and senselessness.**

**We are shining, vessels that are brooms,
dishcloths, meant to clean, not accumulate.
I block the violence
of Self up against the world
and exchange it for
individuality before God,
peace that moves unexpectedly,
never still, never sure.**

**Love is nothing when alone.
I ask for healing for this unit, this tribe
of artists wandering,
trying to make our way through
poverty and loneliness, coming to terms with
things that perished that were
meant to bloom.**

**Take this family into your well-spring,
drench us in your everlasting waters.
We have no fashion or charm,
just us fitted together, sharing everything,
pierced by a sickness we cannot expel.
Expel it for us and fill the cavity
with your affluent efficient flow.
Make passages within that can be maintained,
built-upon, as we honour equally
the silver dollar, ancient ruins
and the blind alien fish
thriving far far below.**

Calling Again

**My clothes are loose
my mind is out of the shadows,
stern in its unwavering demands.**

**God is my one protector
from disaster and from
unhealthy bonds.**

**I will keep my faith as each day
draws me close to the gaping maw
quaking darkness that I know will consume
my strength and my peace.**

**I will hold faith each step I get closer,
trust in my rescue, blind as I am, wobbly
and languishing. I will have faith and grow myself
a brightness that will flash and flood the
tangled thorns, blast through doubt and time
and impossibility. I will trust in my saviour, the
One who sent him, merge with him and play
the tambourine in joyful abandon.**

**I will find my feet lifted from this path
until I see this path below
and then never again.**

**Grace fills the air like the scent of incense burning.
Grace is revealed as the only door
out and into a good life.**

**I will keep faith, have my yoke lightened,
fueled by a journey of less dread, more
alignment, sacred dependency.**

Sing

**I will sing until the end for you
of centipedes and endless hallways,
of the warning stream rising
and the dead birds on the snowbank
that came back too early, fooled
by a false spring.**

**I will sing of flashing lights
and other conditions
that tempt sanity's hold.
And then I will sing of glory at the dinner table,
a morning hug, leaving an opening for grace
throughout it all.**

**I will love you until the end, believe
in your majesty above all
although I am equally blind in the sun as in the dark,
but what I sing for out-paces sight,
is faint but obvious as a babe's eyes glowing
in quiet delight, pulses a clear small core
in the tumbleweed confusion of everyday love as
everyday I need you more, and so
I will go on singing as I am,
rusted, cracked, always
leaning.**

Visceral

**The voice breaks down
into tiny fragments, each
filled with a unique harmony,
some clash in reckless bawls,
others fill with a steady fever.**

**The voice collects itself, gains frenzy
like a stallion no one could tame or mount.
The voice claims death, as even in death
it will not be defeated or subdued,
but will grow like waves in a storm, crash
and come back, rising, swallowing the shore
as it wakes.**

**The voice is a raging giant wanting fleshy dream,
rejecting limitations, leadership
from a reasoning baritone.**

**The voice outweighs imprisonment,
carnivorous oppression and the sighs
of consuming cancer.**

**The voice is tall
for its years.
The fabric it wears
is from the entrails of fate,
from the sinews of predictive design.
It has no cause and effect,
as it shouts out its riddle, its savage roar.**

**You can't confront it and win.
You can't pollute it with existential doubts.**

**It grips the universal jugular
with its teeth and claws,
digs in, utterly enjoying
the bloodied feast.**

Casual Garden

I keep a casual garden
burnt in places, lush by
the climbing trees.
When in despair,
I examine the corners of that garden,
pluck the dangerous weeds.
I scrub the birdbath
and fill it with fresh cold water
placing stones as platforms
for the bees and small birds.
This garden is my favourite place to walk,
small, but with hidden nooks
and a seat for solitude.

It took years of tending to get to this place.
A once-thought cursed corner is now deep green
with violet hues and the perfect shade.
Still there is more to tend
as it is ever changing. Birds come,
leave their droppings and kill
what can be restored.
Squirrels explore, dig holes, preparing for winter.
Raccoons work their nocturnal havoc -
birdbath on its side, flipped steppingstones - evidence
of their hunting for grubs.

The sounds when the neighbours
are sleeping or away
are best. The smells are perfect
of marigolds on the deck and the rain.

There is an animal graveyard in my garden -
a place in front of two tall trees.

**My mother says this garden is beautiful
and she would know.
I rejoice in its poetry.
Everything wants to live,
expand, overflow in this garden.**

**When I forget God loves me,
I look at my garden,
I step onto its bumpy terrain
and know I am one -
joined to its hallowed ground.**

Revived

**Sideways into the thicket
prickly roar, eyelids closed
and then a decade later, a sunbeam
latches to your arm and pulls you out,
renews your skin, the tone of your hair.**

**A decade lost without a voice, without
connection to your core.**

**Here you stride, hardly limping,
a queen, tall, sure of your kinship,
sometimes still weakened by past sentimentality,
but mostly remembering
the promise to you that was made on the swing
when you swung high as the swing could carry you -
your childhood legs gleefully kicking, your long hair
behind you, and a smile that was more glorious
than the first spotted spring flower.**

**Whole again, set upright,
shedding the last of your apprehension,
growing deeper into maturity,
letting the shadows go, as the nectar pours
sweet all around you.**

Creature

**Out of step, filled
with a flame that ignites
a windfall and dreams
upward reaching, past
the umbrella and the cherished flight
of the cardinal.**

**One step, dancing, then tomorrow
comes and there is no dancing to be seen.
Maimed and fearful - the setting sun
coils its rays around an unhappy future and feeds
the roots with sewage.**

**Preferring the hope of a soft landing,
I count the pillars and make a roof, a home.
I fall asleep with this glorious creature at my side.
I wake and it is the first thing I see. It takes me
out into a land of picnics by the water, out
of the stark slam of ancient debts that
must be repaid.**

**It takes me to a greener land
where I can walk, turn corners
and run. Where I can do my rituals,
relieved of desperation, at one
with the hand that opens, at peace
with the hand that holds.**

Direction

**Can this moment be a fruit,
a moist secret, picked and juiced?
Can I follow through with my leap of faith
and leap into the coal fires of survival's uncertainty,
be selfish as the hunter who conserves nature
so he can have enough nature to kill
and make into wall trophies?**

**Am I a dead mouse on the porch who made it
as far as the first freeze, forgot
to build a nest and suffered the consequences?
Am I fortunate as the found street dog,
given kibble, a warm place to lay,
a pack to call her own?**

**Am I here maimed but alive,
like all things living,
crippled by the weight of time?
Why is everything half-formed?
Only young things leap and frolic,
free because of their dependency
on maternal sustenance and protection.**

**My endurance is threadbare.
If I wash and wear it one more time
it will disintegrate and not hold form.
I know nothing but
I do know Jesus -
the bridge and the tunnel below.**

**I know one way, one path
all else is
phantom blood, phantom fulfilment,
just renderings humming 'yes yes -
take my false face as truth,
count my money, my grand accomplishments,
my soft seats, my high seats,
my triple thaw and my double freeze.'**

**The butcher is a psychopath. The liars are in charge.
Steady now, the hand, the moon dangling on a string,
say your necessary farewells.
Jesus is walking, walk with him,
eyes forward, summoned.**

Bridle

**Tear and rip and proclaim
a path you cannot follow
but can taste its every nuance.
Bend into its horizon as though it
were yours, there on glorious display.**

**When change does not come, and it sleeps
like a long clouded-over moon, and spirits
are bones sucked of their marrow -
the most vital of these eaten by mechanical doom -
metal teeth and the turning, turning
of grinding eventuality, wait
and watch the images come and go.**

**The windows are stained
and there is no way to clean them.
Through them I see growth.
I see days I long for that may not come
for another decade, where I will be free.
What is a day? But this thing done, this thing not done.
What is a life? Stealing wakefulness violently
from slumber, pressing into joy
despite the chains and another
book is read. All dreams are singular. Know
the in-breath counts. The out-breath is simply
exhalation.**

I Need My Blood

**I need my blood.
I need the mornings
sightless of dark duties
and encumbering failures
that rise like a high wave
teaming with unseen predators.**

**I need a house without deep mud
at its doorstep and a fire menacingly
burning in the furthest backyard tree.**

**I need to wake up like I used to,
energized, a life to look forward to, bow to,
and say yes, I can do that, I am full.**

**I need God's blowing kiss, a dream
that is more than a dead seed or grand illusion,
to step here and there solid in authenticity,
shed the dread and the pounding trip and fall.**

**I need my blood
not horror-cold professionalism,
being polite while vital body fibres
ricochet against each other, bawling inside,
ripped and rolling like a fish
on a hook, heartlessly pulled
from my home and element, amazed
by how long I am still breathing,
here, without oxygen
or the salty waters of my belonging.**

**I need a bridge
to walk across,
a landscape of freedom and prosperity,
away from this decaying island I sit upon
where massive reptiles wrap
their spiked bodies around, many
creeping on the shore.**

**I need my blood,
to keep my blood,
flowing, be a voice at full strength,
no longer a sigh or a held-back moan.**

**I need this now
to carry on.**

**My branches are all but broken.
My spirit is hardening, tight, tighter
than a heavy stone.**

Building a Temple

**These words are a goodbye
to the dust-bowl chaos, a vision
to act by, pick up pebbles and throw
across a field, over a fence, almost
to the other side.**

**The angels make a wall protecting, bending
their bodies of light like shields
over my children, as they find their way
through uncertainties, undercurrents of terror
and the moon's dropping glare.**

**Addiction in the ice.
Organs enflamed and removed.
But God's love is merciful, takes us
to the threshold, but not beyond.
Secrets are exposed, talked about without shame,
and then are burnt.**

**Sometimes the storm creates a treasure,
a blooming happiness
after its destructive force.
Sometimes after the emptiness, there is finally
a conscious letting go, letting in
the zig-zag flight of finches.
Sometimes after
ghosts are silenced, pathways
are exposed, and hearts once harmed,
are now repaired, easily redeemed.**

Lift

**What I need to see,
I can't - the shape,
the vibration,
a mouth full of Amens.**

**What I need to happen
is the gates I've laboured
in every way to lift, to at last
be lifted, and there will
the re-arranging of disorder,
hopelessness vanquished,
along with the dissolving of cursed errands
and their damaging and rippling influence.**

**What I long for is to be released
but I cannot find a way, surrounded
by chaotic void, as I lie belly-up
capsized in a space of cruel
and perverted punishment.**

**What I dream
I can only envision, clear
as the scuff marks on a white floor,
clear as a male cardinal
on a snow-covered branch.**

**What I dream
is to hail a hidden strength,
to drive a wedge under
these barred doors, lift,
just enough
to fully
slip through.**

Milk and Honey

**The time has come
to say goodbye
to sticky death, the thick
latching-onto shadows
following you
from the laundry room
to the dinner plate.**

**It is time to shape your future
on the other side of this impossible wall,
unite with a merciful tide,
join a breachable adventure.**

**Pollution rises in this captivity,
stiffens the air and brings transgressions.
If you want to leave, ask to leave
and you will be on the other side
of this raging torment.**

**The time has come,
your intentions are exact.
Release any malice,
release all unnecessary bonds.
Walk forward, the way is cleared.
It is time to receive.**

Stand

**I stood
where all things feared
were served with the promise
of this perpetual.**

**I stood
at half-mast,
my energy so recently
abundant, now draining, and
my hopes, mummified, soon
to be buried.**

**I stood and saw what I saw,
but it made no difference.
The light was inferior to this calamity.
Declarations came and went without execution.**

**I stood and said I would not go back,
but I did. I let the fruit spoil,
my own humanity overcome
with a ripe mix
of rage and despair.**

**I stood on a steep slope,
looking for
a soft grassy landing
or a way to stand
with equilibrium.**

Poet

My breath and blood,
my spiritual soldier,
death expresses itself
then ends to find another muse.
Hold me in your form,
unoffended, know I am
capable of true choice,
planting colours before unseen.

My last call, I am withdrawing,
weakening, biting a bitter morsel.
Darkness is a hymn, infiltrating
my subconscious.

I will take the globe and smash the sphere,
my boundless exemplary love, lover
of the embracing midnight, star light and roses.

I have no customs I am determined to keep.
I will give up all my rituals, my summer garden
to walk again, with you, on fire.

Backtrack then forward

Here

**staring at a verging
dignified future
without the disfigurement
of a beggar's shame,
licking-boot gratitude,
and the lies you expect me
to live up to, get in line with
like the gummy-bear being you
think I am - a misdeed,
an aberration, desperate for charity,
and the smiles, pat-on-the heads
from the world's elected ones
of shocking good fortune.**

**Things I know in the crevice of
my cease-fire, when I let my anger dissipate
and I rise above the long-lasting wound,
take no punishment and offer no prostitution,
then I know the grand gifts I have been given.
I conquer your societal meritorious upbringing,
declaring my own justice**

**declaring one light, one hell
I will not stride across or
venture into, not for you
and not to appease
the ingrained guilt brewing below,
jolting my integrity, scorning.**

Threshold

**The eruption ache
of an ultimatum,
laid bare its beams and
its unsunned skin,
a voice bellowing,
roaring a vow that
grows like a creature
absolute in its hellish
demanding form.**

**All things stand extravagant
and excessive especially
when unarmed, unexpecting.
Leave the painted dream
with the waterfowl to peck at
and drive under.
There is something here
in this early day, contracting, anguishing
but with cause.**

**Wretched vigor, swelling
with the effusion
of threatening extremes,
held hostage, here, in a place
where a choice must be made
where all outcomes perceived
are perverse, lethal.**

Chasm

**The chasm stretches
wider, takes in tree roots,
purple flowers and hedgehog homes.
Feeding it seems like the best thing,
but it only grows in its immensity,
never settles with what it already has.**

**By necessity it formed,
by decades of perpetual hammering and floods
it tore the ground, became
a mouth-hole, wide and hungry
to increase its possession of the joyfully living,
to destroy the green sprouts of creativity
seeded by a fullness without fragmentation,
self-deceit or a draining wound, continuous.**

**By its nature, this chasm is a long pit,
entering the underworld, releases ghosts
and gases to toxify any hope remaining.**

**I wish I was a bird with a great wing-span, strong
enough to fly away from its vacuous maw.
But I am human, and it wants me inside its dirty
chamber, to lick the salt from my skin
with its sharp ridged metallic tongue.**

This Day

**Is this the day
we fall free into a reverie
of tranquil totality,
no more groping for fulfilment
in the plastic-container stacks
left outside our door?**

**Is this the day
when we release all damaging alliances,
when we can seek
without the weighted past
tethered in chains to our heels?**

**Is this the day
of metaphysical reckoning,
when reason sharpens, reforms to merge
with our own devotion -
ideals and reality become the same
this day, this existence - a dissolution
of repetitive efforts and suffering -
where life and truth yield equally
each into the other?**

Union

Do you love me,
or is your love
too magnificent
against my failed and hapless
virtue, fetus-formed,
barely pulsing but trying
to flesh out and depict details
in contrast, in a fundamental form?

Do you hear me,
as a mosquito-buzz nuisance
to your bright and flawless grandeur,
or is my deficient faith worth
the encounter, evoking your mercy?

Do I know you
at all or only as a dream
of being engaged to your
wild erupting
lava-flow inspiration,
to the hot touch of your tenderness
here and here
and my heart and self
at one, at peace
fastened to your love,
receptor of your astonishing
calypso flavour?

Combat-zone

**How do I receive a future,
inheritor of such
a dense darkness?**

**Healing is spared, the sunburn
grows into a rash and takes over
the possibility for stillness, sanity.
Everyday I am splintered, struggling
to conquer the dominant strain
lacerating my equilibrium with
its anarchy and drive.**

**I see the black hole conjunct
with the sun, transitions
that can transform any wound
into a terrifying progression.
I embody lethargy as the renouncer of hope
in the afternoons where there is nothing
to understand.**

**Fantasy is not a future, not
a worthy evaluation, though hypnotic
in its almost tangible relief.
It is not about an unfortunate circumstance,
but about the journey of my faith,
the validity of miracles
and God's gracious love.**

**Sing me a future. Do I believe?
Do I step down from all insight
and fall into an agnostic stand-still?
Do I accept this nullifying reality,
impenetrable, embrace meaninglessness
and lose my final ground?**

My love

**I am still in awe
of the deep delight that
rises in your eyes
like a constellation surfaces
from the thick flesh of dark night
and sings to me - ethereal,
images pounding the back of my mind,
breaking through the wet cemented barrier,
sure to drown me, incorporate me into its own.**

**You are magic, a wilderness
tempered with spiritual intelligence where
your genius sits on a throne, high above the
primal ground, directing each disruption into
an exuberant harmony, changing the dull light
of chaos into a living ceremony, pulsing
and sensually tearing the seams
- heightened evolution -**

**my love,
my truest friendship, your power is beautiful.
It never wanes or falters. I love you still
like at the beginning
when we found a field and twirled
in joyful abandon, knowing what we found
and what was to come. It is coming
again, a future without waste or holding back.**

**Your rich glory raging like
a storm-tossed sea.
You are tied to the resting point.
You are tied to the gravity
of the moon. You spread your arms.
I watch you receive, and then
I will watch what enfolds.**

Crisis

**Release this sickness from my spirit,
call me to recuperate,
to be on the verge of a tremendous awakening,
and then to cross over.**

**Pluck me from this impending catastrophe.
It is yours to do and no one else',
to solve the riddle and allow me
to heighten my focus, undistracted by
this draining burden.**

**In this place, there is silence,
has been for so long, silence enough
to make any atheist gloat,
affirming a barren heaven, denying
everything that does not serve gravity
and inevitable darkness.**

**But I am no atheist.
I have felt your ground-shaking tenderness
envelop me, make me yours, eternal.
I have known your great mercy, your personal love,
your taking away what must be gone
and letting stay what I cannot live without.**

**But here, in this spawning hell of hopelessness
I cannot find you, cannot hear your
whisper or your guidance out.
I am scared and at the end.**

**Everyday the birds wake at 4 a.m.
and sing your glory.
I know your glory**

and so I must see
this harrowing hardship as an illusion,
crack this façade
and its senseless insides,
hold it to your light, saturate in your light,
and believe in that light, only.

Triage

**The fragility of failure,
sunset over the ruined city
and life never the flowering garden
it could be.**

**All is captured by death,
after leaving heaven and
when returning - decay and fear and hope
of eternity in spite of the silence.**

**A wilderness of anxiety overtaking
the summit, suffocating the interior
with its acid juices, following the chain link
until the grave.**

**Waste and enormous hunger,
rejecting reality to keep sane.
This is no way to continue,
no life of rapid transitions or stepping out
of the mire onto solid land.**

**Here, the temperature is predictable,
the yawning pit of disaster is always expanding,
nearing and nearing.**

**So take this last bit of courage
stand on the edge and let yourself go,
know what it is to be truly radical,
risking the fall, committed
to the end result.**

Released

**In the end I call you
dark as spit, corrupting
intuition, bringing sickness
to a child's mind, dragging her
by the feet through your everglade
of grasping demons, blotting out
her dreams and prayers, corroding her
imagination.**

**At this end, weak and wispy,
your form is residue, your power,
only a dispelling illusion, nothing
against the greatness of love.**

**I will give you forgiveness,
no more warring
with your bloody dominance,
lacerating you, lacerating me - a war
of equal ferocity and destruction.**

**Our interdependence is broken.
The umbilical cord
between us, dissolved.
You are now a stranger.
I bless you and send you
blessed, on your way.**

Worship Art or No Art

**Speak of God as a necessity,
finding peace in the wilderness of
eternity, shining.**

**Speak of God not as an artifact
of the uneducated past,
knowing the greatest poets and philosophers
struggled, even if flawed, with letting in the light.**

**Open the richest of intellectual dimensions
through obedience to truth,
giving honour to art that outlives
more than one season,
as bloodlines are cut, cultures revolutionized,
and heroic forgiveness
is seen as paramount, the holy grail
of our strivings.**

Fountain

**A fountain sits
in the centre of my backyard,
watering and shading the mourning doves
pecking at the dirt below.
Yet I am deep in a hazardous denial,
giving weight to an illusion that
bonds me to the desert and
sand dunes rolling as far
as my eyes can see.
So deep I cannot see the fountain
or the backyard or
the delicate joy of choice.**

**Today I will make a decision
step onto the platform
and take my chances.
In this place, this quiet morning,
I will feel myself changed, unchained.
Then, I will start to dig into the sands
until I find a wetness burning, keep digging
until I release a rising flow,
a personal permanent resurrection.**

Rules

**Rules have rubberized
lost their erected stiffness
and are more like a wave,
pliable, still connected but
able to make adjustments.**

**Rules enflamed with strange
possibilities, leading the argument for
erratic purity.**

**Secret rules made individual,
measured by how they inspire, how they
sustain inspiration and that is all.**

**Rules like bamboo, alive, fed by the angels,
malleable as hope, mature
with equal strength and flexibility.**

**Rules to abide by,
honour the turning of the clock,
allowing for precision, grounding
and Dog Star following,
roaming bright, invigorated.**

Initiation

**Punctured
on the last step, from
the last step.
No openings, breath holes.
Rigid boards, brick work
for miles, and infestation
in the corners, under
floorboards.**

**Call me a dreammaster,
someone to remind me
who owns me and how much
I am actually worth.**

**The landscape begins,
first in ice-cream tones
of frosted blue and whites,
then into a rich mustard yellow
and animated dark purple.
Seeing this on the cold walls, under
false lights and a dreary atmosphere,
consuming, watching duties
done, lacking eloquence or
personal concern.**

**Guide me into your soundproof room,
tempt me with insanity, then
let my accusations be muffled
until they are inaudible.**

**A clean bill of health,
health in every salutation.
Days spent spawning music and shrines
to whatever passes as holy.
Days showered with talkative sparrows,
no spots left to rot or grow a putrid stench,
just small spillages, here, there,
easily wiped, not worthy of
being recalled or inducing
a lengthy tortured conversation.**

Waterfall

**Sweet and long
is the blooming tide
to take me over the dam,
pushing me down the waterfall,
graduating to reckless exhilaration.**

**I belong to the tender aftermath
the peace of the freed captive,
the relief that lies in wait
of every oblivious soul.
I belong to the late-spring fields
and the baptism of butterflies.**

**I will take no misdeeds with me
to this elevated service.
I will cut out the tongue
of any discovered demon,
let them know
they have no resources
or influence.**

Slingshot

Itself, lips
high off the ground.
Answer twice and then
no more.
Retreat, understand
all the world is a grave
and still, sprouting.
This journey, this climb
collecting the many shades
of intertwining foliage.
Half-moon is enough moon
to see. Dump yard turns
into a mouse's home, a place
to raise her offspring, find food,
with many secure hiding holes.
Flesh is a revelation,
is the end result of pure spirit
sparkling.
Tomorrow we will know why
today we feel lacking
when we find our watering-hole,
a reservoir garden, glorious labour,
cascading.

Monarchs

**The monarchs begin their migration.
The souls of the deceased start to visit.
Temperance comes
with discipline, conviction
to not evade the truth or promises.**

**The last time I looked into your eyes
you were dying, trusting my love for you
and all the love that shielded around
your frail and fading body.
One year and I still miss you in my gut,
an emptiness that cannot be quelled.
This is the bird song, the emphasis
of individual brightness. The gift of you
and others too of gentle and lost natures.**

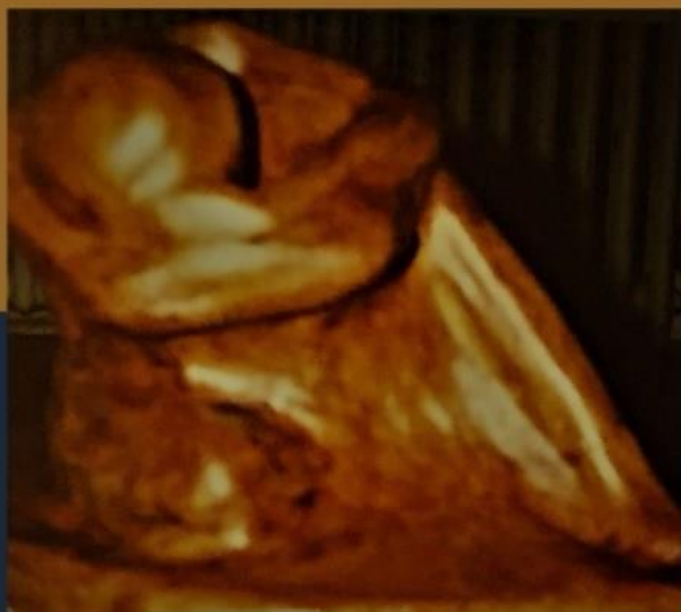
**The monarchs come to my back garden.
I greet them. I know each one -
their wing patterns, their flight patterns.
One day I will be a monarch,
a whiff of my soul, darting
from flower to flower, offering
a mild comfort to soothe
the pangs of vanished intimacies.**

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Allison Grayhurst



The Light Given

The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst

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Allison Grayhurst

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Getting Out

Blackout

**If you knew
the fierce immersion,
tarnishing your already
dilapidated innards
would you have sunk so close to death,
your heart racing, aching with excruciating
escalation, skipping beats?
Would you have preoccupied your mind
with other people's good fortune, grow
bitter at your own failure to thrive,
and desired a dream that was never part
of your original vision?**

**You have one path and you must follow.
One that allows for no detours
or trips to sunny islands.
Faith is needed after the fall, before you land -
in the in-between time
when destruction feels inevitable, trust
there are arms to catch you, angels to guide you
gently to the ground, stand you upright
without permanent damage.
This faith is not a leap but happens
after you are pushed off the edge,
happens in the anticipation of disaster.**

**If you knew that was what was asked for
would you have let itretch up and slice
your essential organ like a pie?
Will you now, that you are recovering,
trust, as you are still falling, still facing
what seems like only-doom?**

**Will you relax into God's gracious love,
awaken a new level of faith that beats afresh
in spite of the rigid rocky terrain
fast approaching below?**

I Stand Up

**I stand up, everything
falls down, the load and the balance
on a soft bed of nothingness to catch
and embrace in a cruel dream
of freedom.**

**I draw my breath in the rising wave,
knowing the calm waters are too lonely
for sustenance.**

**This has butchered my means of survival,
drowning my body in acid-mud.
This has rounded out the edges, so
like a hard ball, I am tumbling down
an incline that stretches out
to a cliff with fast momentum,
no chance of halting or even slowing down.**

**I found a piece of joy in day-to-day service
and must pay with blood flow, extreme heat and drought,
pay and never have a day without survival's worrisome
stranglehold gnawing out my intestines, making holes
here, serious as death, serious
as an asteroid breaking the atmosphere,
thinning my faith and all I hold sacred,
tying it down on a large rock, trying me up
on a large rock, in slow decomposition,
waiting the buzzard's peck and sting.**

Veiled

**The splendid vision
was announced then
denounced and the whole
inspiring fire fizzled invisible.**

**For decades, possessed,
but still able to protect the ones I love.
Yesterday and months before, the possession
lost its rule, the blood rage coiled inside of me cooled
but this open space created has taken away
my fight with it, and every ounce of security.**

**Concentrating on this stand-by whiff of hope,
hope as the thing practiced and opposite to struggling,
though not enough to fill my lungs with faith, not enough
to inhale a good breath or breathe at ease
before sleep.**

**I don't even know my name
anymore - my demons were never slain,
they just dissipated, taken by a ghostly victory
that I cannot claim as my own courage-doing
or as a song.**

**It is good that they are gone
but what they gave (food for survival)
is gone with them and I cannot see a way
forward, cannot see any secret that will feed this house
and stabilize it so I can live, clean the floor
and not wonder how long I can step here, step here
and hold the ones I love in safety.**

**The race is done though I never reached
the finish line. I was just plucked from the track
onto a sideroad without a knapsack or a spoon.
I can blow right through my fingers.
I can curl my toes but I cannot take a step,
not like this, deserted, helpless
at this bardo crossing.**

Useless

**This shelter is threadbare
like a low-battery flashlight,
barely making a dark corner visible.
I sang to find an easeful slumber.
I left my empty bin by the road,
begging for a refill.**

**Summer is behind me.
The grass is torn
from tiny claws and pecking.
I live below the breathing line
and there is no way to rise higher
or join a harmony to unfasten my chains.**

**Attempting flashing solutions in a frantic rush
trying for escape, but the land I stand on
is too hard to burrow under
and there are no trees to climb.**

**I wait for the door to open, knowing the door
is just a dream. That sickly feeling overflows
as each effort I make for freedom
deflates, fruitless, impotent.**

Interchange - warm running

**Open the stark and twisted plot,
then replenish it with a prize perfume,
everlasting, infiltrating with its veiled odour
as a mild but sublime soothing caress.**

**Dry up the stream that ran toxic
through the yard, dig the trench deeper
and build a river with a waterfall
pouring down, energized by power manifold.**

**Pull out the splinter that slipped close to bone,
for decades festering, bulging in a painful swell,
leave the wound to air and forget its throb.**

**Swim through the spectrum colours
that trapped you in their grip,
burst out of their array and be dazzled
on a hill, at a height triumphant, astounding.**

The Spell was a Shield

**The spell was a child
that fell from a high tree,
now broken, always
asleep. Blindfolded climbing
up a steep hill until I crossed
the pinnacle-edge and found myself laid
flat - a million fractures
puzzle-piecing my solidarity.**

**At the end of the labyrinth
into death's mocking jaws, swallowed
into the heartless chamber, crushed in very direction,
no soft resting spot, no treaties for equality or deliverance.**

**The spell has evaporated, and with it, false notions
of guarantees, help from others, every earthly
security I tied my lifeline to.
Thresholds were crossed
only to learn they were never there, just to
learn the Aquarius-light I was drinking from was
no light but a bitter detachment from reality, a lack
of understanding.**

**The spell is charred, taken away.
I am open now, and new and
ever so fragile without a path or protection.
Everything is air, and what isn't air is thin glass,
meaningless see-through enclosures, a false
blocking off of some things from other things,
a false truth destroyed with no truth left yet
to replace it.**

Slap

Limpid dreams
removed with grand intervention,
their ricochet aspirations
receded past sight
and anticipated applause.
Avoiding their influence like
I avoid a bruised apple, rancid
undergrowth and go-to comforts.
It doesn't work
to alleviate the raw intensity pangs
or to revamp those dreams into something
viable, buckled-up and worthy.
I release my indulges of hope,
release a future deserving of a satisfied death
with seldom the anguish of regrets and senselessness.
I let this excellent illusion end, concede,
just breathe for the sake of it, just
wake up and do what I do, corrected,
my poverty exposed.

Crack the Exterior, Interior Resonance

**Neither the net
or the withdrawal
will get you into its vice,
but the trick of broken dreams,
walking backwards, assuming
nothing new is possible
that will be your defeat, the pit
in the black olive that stuck in your throat,
swelled up your windpipe and laid you down.**

**Throw away the decadence of fear,
no matter how reasonable,
fuel yourself only on ethereal faith
even though you feel condemned,
can see no exit door or revival.**

**Choose God over understanding,
peace over rationality.
Smell the oil, expose the miracle rising to meet you,
pushing you on, defend its mastery and strength,
choose truth that triumphs over traditions,
penetrates every nook and cranny,
inverting, setting aright
visible appearances.**

A King

**Bold blood brilliance,
the tactics, the unencroachable confidence
of his glacial brutality, clemency,
making victory out of nowhere.
Odds always against him, titling one way
to be seen and the opposite way to be heard.
Swelling with passion, with genius strategies
unthought of, fertilizing the crescendo of
music chanting his praise and undeniable
sovereignty.**

**Introduce me, let me smell
his intake-outtake of electricity,
the absolute procurement of all his needs
through risk and never doubting his good fortune.
Let me see into his eyes
devouring like a blackhole stillness, a force
immune to resistance.
Let me witness his charm,
the slavish devotion he demands and receives
naturally.**

**At once crowned,
(still frenziedly restless at the centre)
then blindsided by an unexpected,
equally violent, legendary and grand
downfall.**

Marsh

**I walk into a forbidden marsh,
to rest from the penalty of my dreams.
I place my head on a pile of wet debris
and wait to see who or what approaches.**

**If everything was in line with a harmonic tune,
with the uniting truth, then my hopes
would not cling like leaches to my thighs,
reducing me with malnourishment.
I could piece together a path to travel
out of this marsh, out of the gloom
and rotting mulch.**

**As it is, I am overdrawn,
my bucket is cracked
and my clothes outgrown.
The wind has always scooped me into
its scarcity and a solitary translation
without recognition.
No one sees me or needs me anymore.**

**The marsh is my devoured saving.
The stench of what is left fills my nostrils,
reminds me of my stagnation,
is the rising gaseous force
of my obvious doom.**

Maple Syrup

Today the cup is cracked,
freedom arrives lacking support
but giving time for me to strengthen enough
to make the flight and wipe the table
spotless.

Today the gift arrives
in the guise of a curse, compassion
manifesting as trauma and
either I will go mad or lighten my load
and affirm the movement finally possible,
outshine my fears, avoiding the scurrying ants
in the pantry, close the door and find alternate
sources of food, incapable of infestation,
pure as well-water, pure as God's love always is
when I accept it, when I accept all I own is a choice
of faith or cynicism, when I welcome
the hand of the one who sent me,
hold that hand, following and wanting
for nothing more.

Gift

**Rebellion innate in the seed,
at the start, acknowledging
the culpability of the
the acceptable unjust, of landing
where others crawl, and still others, soar.**

**I cracked, eager for righteousness
but ungrateful.
You stood beside me, never wavering
or surrendering to anxiety. Your devotion
surpassed any generosity I've ever known.
Where others have abandoned or made
light of the news, offering
no humanity or understanding -
you alone held my hand,
shadowed me through hospital halls,
nourishing me through my despair
and the savage aftermath of failure.**

**There is nothing to be gained from
that gruesome experience, but your triumphant love,
that you were there and remain here
as my refuge, an anointment of great mercy,
a lasting antidote.**

Rabbit

**Broken longing
healed in the eyes
of a tender receiver, blessed
by mercy and the promise of perpetual drink.
Soft, silky warmth beside me
fragile and more precious than
any perfectly-cut gemstone.**

**Faith once mangled now restored
to a richer glory than introduced before.
Solitude in communion - God inside
a gentle touch, mutual bond and loneliness appeased.**

**Sweet waters of fate receive me,
my neck is stretched high,
my arms are a basket.**

**Let the unassuming reign,
place me secure in this place
where the private and the meagre
are honoured, quietly
declared yours.**

If

**If we live
through this hangman's touch,
outrun this heatwave and find
an oasis in spite of the odds,
then we will be sealed
in the summer of our belonging.**

**We will take only what we are given
to own, dress up occasionally, mostly
be charmed by sweet and simple delights.**

**If we survive
the devouring vultures, the
vanity of self-punishment and
the unbreakable natural law,
then our breadbasket will be
overflowing with leftovers,
our hearts will be still in the peace
of eternal love, loving this day and the next
as lovers do, happy to serve,
happy to fill the bathtub
and soak.**

You Heard Me

**You heard me speaking
and you shook the floor,
loosening the dust and devastating
sadness until that floor
was dismantled and replaced
by a stronger, easier-to-clean
platform, until the miracle
rose unpolluted in a continual
swelling, sinking the darkness for good,
calling brother to sister to the truth
of your perfect temple, worshiping the work
of love, relieving the weight of chaos.**

**You heard me and I know you are perfect,
more real than the burrowing fears inside my head,
more powerful than the churning sickness of
anxiety that overtakes my gut, overtakes and takes
me away from you.**

**You who heard me,
through paralysis and poison,
through my weak overtures, ripped away
my unhealthy accumulations, cleansing
my desires that missed the mark,
until I saw and committed
to one voice, one priority, listening.**

Zen Virgin

**This killer yoke
was pieced together from another century,
enforcing brutal labour,
swollen joints from overload
and depression swamping the upper ground.**

**You know it has always driven the hunt,
from your parents' childhood homes
in Indian monsoons and Polish Februarys -
dishwashing, factory working, 4 a.m. typing,
deciding to plot an unexpected ending,
yet still, following form.**

**You know you can get out only
if you stop defending all of its creation, only
if you drain your devotion and broaden what
you are and are not permitted to be.**

**You can get out, flashing, golden-sea eyes
flashing and leaping in celebration of the door touched
and opened, the re-wiring that burns every wire
and sets down the players
and the playing board.**

**Do this emptying.
Trust it is done and it will be done.**

**You can hold your shoes in one hand
and your truth in another,
put on those shoes and yield to a direction
unprecedented.**

Mark it down

**Great joys approach
like weeping harmonies in music,
relief in the course-correction,
astonishment in the manifold beauty.
Decorations placed around the table.
Declarations for devotion riveting
through the backyard garden where
everything overflows with abundance,
is a tapestry of young blood frolicking.
Shared surges of strong faith between us,
because our love is never ending
because the loudest boom has exploded
altering the vibration here and forever,
a higher octave, a mountain sailed over,
a vision walked into, gallant and kind -
welcoming, offering
to fully bathe our bodies, open a fortune box
so we can step away from restrictions, step into
a beautiful anticipation.**

Pasture

**I can see my mind in victory
over the clinging contaminating thoughts
that used to spiral in a vigorous loop
through my days even when in joy,
even when hearing a tambourine tune
rise up, happy and fresh.
Now those thoughts struggle to stand,
abandoned in a desert vast
and widowed. Dehydrated unto death
they sometimes whisper, but barely have a hold
or exert a reasonable authority.**

**My shame has packed its belongings and left.
My self-pity has reduced its wound
to a pin-prick along with my bitterness.
Gratitude is the only dream worth feeding.
I will feed it and not be overwhelmed
or react to desperate hungry
rumblings, not react in desperation
to what is lacking on the canvas, on the alter,
or in my understanding and this growing surrender.**

Learning

**Because I said
it was not enough,
the emptiness came
like a hard beat plummeting
me into doom.**

**Because I cared to record
each pain, betrayal and fracture,
I could not walk fast and glinting,
dragged back and down.**

**Because I lost my worship,
I lost my joy and the heat of life
that inspires.**

**Because I took heed of these pitfalls
and take one section of the day at a time
to do and explore both service and favour,
I am uncovering a mosaic beneath my feet,
smelling scents I thought disappeared with my youth.**

**Because I keep the rituals that keep me sane,
in storm or shade, I pray more than I dream
and when I dream it is about abstractions,
about tree branches, blankets, about
the hair's breadth distance between sea and stars.**

Immersed

**This shift is gracious
like a runaway found and comforted.
Disguised as an axe-lop,
as a callous reduction of earned respect,
this shift is permission
for exploration, expansion into
clear waters, tickled by the fish seen
circling below.**

**I can greet those fish,
each one as an individual, bend my body
and enjoy the details of their scales,
the space between their fins, and their lips,
thick and sometimes scarred
by hooks or other near-disasters.**

**I can give up my burden, my self-attention
and observe, appreciate their maneuvering
between my calves and shins, over my toes,
curious at these fleshy stumps of mine,
appearing in their home.**

**I can tell them I am friendly,
a friend, not here to make a disturbance.
I can be motionless for a while, because of the shift.
Because of the shift I am opened, receiving gladly
each delicate undulating swerve,
each nibble, sway.**

Outline

Too bad you got burned
on the spell of worldly accomplishments
and comparison, that you fell
into the snowbank and drenched yourself through.
Friendly false eyes in the flame,
in the sweating ruthless ocean - you lost
the hand that held you to truth and the longing
for a deeper betterment.

But now you are home, proclaiming
the invisible as your building blocks - piled high
and mortared together strong against every storm.
You almost got pulled into the everlasting pit, fooled
by fool's gold, but you reached the upper edge and
lifted yourself to a safe landing.

Eat from your bowl and be grateful.
Everything you asked for is already yours.
Walk away from the party,
shake hands, give uncommitted hugs,
then read by the dim light, knowing your true riches,
knowing all that you treasure is complete, thriving
in this compact tried-and-true family
and in the landscape of your evolving solitude.

Footsteps

of a haunted lion mourning
her lost young. In a cage,
another brow folded in grief
and grim expectation.
Entitlement massaged into the bright blank eyes
of the classless rich with their toothy smiles
and ego-feeding gestures
of generosity.

The lion is haunted, the rabbit
is caged and the mournful dog longs for kinship.
The sacred is devoured but not for long
and not forever
as joy overtakes with one relaxed touch,
one moment of complete enjoyable surrender
where nothing impure
can enter.

That moment is worth poverty, worth
the fevered greed swirling around,
spoiling the atmosphere,
tricking with false kindness and ignorance of self
that leads to chaotic manipulation.
It is worth the penalty of no security

just to combine for a few moments
with another's spirit, be grand
in such holiness, be humbled
by such rudimentary love.

Jesus in the Marrow

**You arrived again, reviving
the groove, clearing
out the debris of lingering
madness and anxiety, brilliant
blazing again with your miracles,
your compassion that leaves me breathless
with joy, surges within with affection, protecting,**

**feeling like a did when I was a child
and my father walked with me on his shoulders
and I could see higher, further than ever before,
safe and moving, knowing
I would never be harmed, never abandoned,
knowing the freedom of a child's fearlessness,
trust in the strength of the one who loves me,
trust in the power of the one who carries me like
a queen, like someone special,
unshackling my imagination, restoring my vigour
and swoon.**

**You arrived again and I remember
all of it, all of your love,
dazzling, perfect, saturating
my seat at the table, overflowing.**

Intertwined

**Together like odours
that merge in a closed room,
blending indistinguishable,
we are continual - each the same
as the other - in plague breath, in worries,
and in peace-filled joys, hopes that restore
strength and future paths beautifully unfolding.**

**So we decorate inside, never letting on
how much care we give to each detail.
Truth is kind to us as we hold hands across
the sofa, smiling at each other because
there is no corruption between us, no hidden
regrets or festering resentments when we see each other
we see a gift of eternal faithfulness, a lifetime pact,
sure-footed, winged and light and rich as honey
on the tongue, as a friendship that has never betrayed
or grown stale, and a love in a constant cycle of aching,
being satiated, counting on satiation and thresholds
reached and surpassed, sensuously mastered
together, often weary, but never of each other.**

**Only you are my love, bound
like the stem to its flower,
and the hawk to its sharp eye.**

**We will give nothing to the rest
that does not join our great love,
tries to defile our green fields flowing
or make us believe in less than this miracle.
For all things of life are ours -
our veins, our holy light-strings,
intensely locked, tenderly alive.**

This end

**This end is an offspring
to tend to and adore,
breaking through distinctive patterns
that worked for a while, but now,
only harm.**

**This offspring is musical,
composing practices and prayers,
hungering for the details
to disinfect and clean.**

**This joy is unspoken,
activity with no burdensome description,
uninfected with expectations, obligations
or the guarding dog.**

**This house has been lived in,
all things that have died have died
again, deeper, and finally here, renewed.**

**Faith is the exact destination, lapping the plate
sparkling so all that is left is awe and mercy, digesting
simplicity in the swelling brightness before me.**

**I have you again like at the start
when I first witnessed your face
and hair and eyes and loved you
with a bliss that in the past
I could only steal from books but now
I owned, uniquely as my own.**

**Trees hang over the cliff.
Behind me is the summit.
My foolish hopes align
with divinity's commands.
Bars are dropped, lightweight like pins.
Moon and sun full, clearly visible
in the same morning sky.**

Homecoming II

Returning to the kelp forest
as a companion to a larger inhabitant,
as a guest to the great reef waters,
a lover of the odd and miraculous,
seduced by succulent influences,
descending then rising all in good speed.

I welcome the sand dwellers
and the tunnel diggers. I am welcomed
by the tentacled and the fanged,
and by the soft, squishy translucent floaters.

I am just another creature that eats or will be eaten,
and I relish in this environment of unquestioning acceptance
my minuscule place.

I ride the back of the bottom feeder. I find my own
way through the caves, avoiding the high price
of this liberty.

I have returned and I am not leaving
for a more agreeable, less authentic reality.
My form is older, broken, degenerating, but

I feel it again, my nerves,
secret sensations, glorious intensity,
awakening like during the first fall,
like the first time waiting
to being caught, irrevocably
saved.

Jesus Holds

**Nudging, pushing,
foot-tripping to
kindle a dream that
runs publicized on every
channel, uttering its happy fortune,
lined up with divine commands.**

**The abyss is an arrow shot right through,
splitting what doesn't belong away from
the thriving harvest. If you try to
cross it, you will fall into it,
for the health of the harvest cannot be soiled
with past inclusions.**

**Promises made are finding
fruition, and greed and bitterness
have diffused into a calm surrender
to the unknown.**

**This friendship lasts forever,
it does not let go
in the wake of an attaching darkness.
It banishes anger, exposes
scars covering the face
and under layered clothes.**

**This friendship demands no other
connection as strong as its own,
peels away the scaly scabs inside the ears,
adds up all dividends, then pays out without
scratching or lashing
the spinning inner sacred core.**

Not a Mirage

**Ambushed, held hostage, then forgotten,
discarded, starved and too weak
to move. I find myself in a dead forest
that was burned by a fire a few years ago -
just sprouts of trees and a few ants trailing
the chewed-up ground.**

**I will find a cabin to rest in and get warm,
then find food in that cabin and rejuvenate.
I will not think of them (those who took me)
more than I have to. I will not
devote my energy
to bitterness but fasten myself
to thoughts of a future where freedom
is mine and I am not obliged to sleep
my nights in a mite-infested bed or
pull at my hair-strands
in boredom.**

**My burden is unloaded,
my shackles are far away
after so many decades.
It will take commitment to shine
in order to shine, but I will shine.**

**Near a country river
I will make my home, remain
tied to a promise like a covenant devoid
of self-pity, return to joy
as though never captured, never broken.**

Stepping In

Against Gravity

He sings because he is song,
essence-song -
potent life, potent death forever.
He dreams salubrious dreams,
fatter at the core and needle-hard all around.
He lost the need for enchantment
and exhibition. The inveterate intensity
within him is mastered, absorbed into his every cell.
It is not that he is better, only more genuine
in his connection, metaphors advancing,
infiltrating his pulse.

He knows because he is wild, dangerously free.
Break him with poverty and he will break every rule.
He will burst into flight, dancing against gravity,
against a blood-moon.
Tin-foil wrap him into a put-upon routine
and he will make music from the crackling -
laid out flat, pressed down,
he will transform his form, rising
whole in an inspired reverie.

Poetry is Breath

**Poetry is breath,
not a sailboat sunk
decades ago mid-ocean,
far from any desire for discovery
let alone retrieval.**

**Poetry is everything,
not the thing never talked about,
avoided into non-existence
because it is uncomfortable
and far too strange.**

**Poetry is like God,
only not God, but tied to God
like a puppet to the puppeteer's strings
dependant on God for any and all
animation.**

**Poetry is coming,
burning down the aisle
to its lasting consummation.**

**Deny it and it will by-pass you,
and its gift, its magnificence
(like a first love that feels
that first love unending)
you will never experience.**

**Poetry is not song.
In some ways (thunder-lightning beat)
more primal.
In some ways (blood-curdling word connections)
less.**

**Poetry is not like birth
is more like death -
only mentioned when necessary,
but always inevitably
necessary.**

Poetry is breath.
If you love it, you will know it
like a lover, satisfying, surprising,
strenuously demanding.
If you pretend it is not for you,
then it is not,
and you will go through your days
without it, missing that meal,
that next-layer rare connection
that has no substitute or important equal.

Maelstrom

**In preference
instilling
the conditions
of terror**

**Fly like a hen
across the field and back
to the barn**

**Could there be another dream
worthy of oiling or is there just
inactivity everywhere causing
grid-lock, prolonging depression and time spent
under the rafters watching the game?**

**I am somewhere identical to where I was before,
yet labouring under its own Academy - learning
the tricks, discerning the only essential tea
adequate to brew.**

**There is the other side to this
and I will get there
without therapy or disintegration.
I will get there, intact, not a garment
soiled or torn.**

Inertia Foiled

**I could speak ugly
like a suicide weapon
inflating misery into
a ballooned and final action,
irrevocable.**

**I could cry like I was begging -
one leg broken, both legs
unusable, cry in my rejection,
plead pity like a half-crushed
ant.**

**I could hide in my comfortable spot,
refusing to move or to attempt a peering-out,
beyond
my visible understanding.**

**I could stop and stop forever
but I can't because
love is stirring, waking
ready to come down the stairs
and share a language, a trust
that overpowers my sluggish mind-flow,
tells me**

**I could just receive
and dedicate my purpose
alone
to this sensation.**

In the Bloodline

**In the bloodline
like walls of lead
storing blockages like
clots and unlivable dilemmas,
the past is a monster
telling you what and what you don't
deserve, beating on your brain
like on a dusty rug that will never
rid itself of mites no matter how hard
it is hit, will never release
its stains, can only be thrown out, over
the rail, into the dumpster.**

**In the vital present, uncompromised by thought
and expectations, nothing is determined,
no fortune teller to foretell what doesn't yet exist.**

**Gravity is a false witness,
a trickster in the fold, folding this into that
into complex patterns void of significance,
except as patterns to follow, analyze, get lost in
as a desperate hope for control.**

**But the galaxy is not gravity,
is affectionate, unpredictable, purer
than understanding.
Bloodlines are straight lines
that nature abhors.**

**Ignore common enemies,
blow out the candles, blow,
arousing the birthing pulse
of a strange and glorious logic.**

What Do I Belong To?

**I waited like a face
before a mirror
waiting for expression,
waiting for an answer to carry me through
until mealtime.**

**I washed the clothes, did all things
necessary to keep clean and fertile,
to rejuvenate and knead out the numbness
infiltrating one limb and another.**

**I asked like I was instructed to ask,
grazing at every opportunity, in spite
of the lack.**

**I moved against the shadows so they
wouldn't consume, making every effort
not to harden, to curtail
this stasis that will turn to sickness and
turn again to death.**

**I am waiting for a reaping
in this favourite place
I call my own, so I can build upon,
have a steady flow to satiate all thirst,
have breathing room to flesh-out dreams -
some prayed for, some unexpected.**

Peel

**Orange peel
peel away my
heartless woes,
condemn again
the general rule
and allow the lotus
to bloom.**

**Remarkable day
that snatches away
the mystique from the mystics,
horseback rides to the summit
then descends at high velocity,
never losing ground or footing.**

**Power in my mind, I trust what I believe,
finally not fooled by the artificial
or displays of unquestioning confidence.
Finally my hope is tied to my faith.**

**I squeeze the fruit and smile in amazement
as I taste its intoxicating droplets,
let them pool in my mouth,
sensually reviving, loosen the grip
then drink.**

Cut the Reins (Romulus over Numa)

**Before equality
was a loophole-word
that meant each-to-their-own,
there were possibilities, retaliation,
convictions that gnawed crazed in the gut,
not tended to as complex calculations.**

**Blood was required for those who walked
bare-footed, in chains. Smiles were overlooked
because every movement forward could be attacked
and the attackers were ruthless,
were the upper-cast-surveyors, pursing their lips
for future indulgences and the grand cutting-down.**

**Before there was war then there was religion,
rituals to replace the war with locked-in-duty
and unchallengeable hierarchy.
The philosopher king was a king
of masterful manipulation.
With him, peace reigned
as long as the chairs started with
were the chairs stayed with,
each accepting their given seat no matter
its disconnection from dignity or its captivity.**

**Better the clarity of servitude than
to decorate the death of freedom
with a bribe, false expectation
and regulated civility.**

**Better the sibling-slayer, bared-tooth ruler
over the priest. Better the glutton
owning his transgressions
over the secret-eater, pretending**

compassion with charity, and devotion
with upholding traditions,
basing wisdom on semantics, burying alive
the disobedient sex-alive misfits in a room
with a soft bed, a cup of water and an obedience to shame,
strong enough that they go quietly, underground,
accepted enough that the perpetrators feel justified,
fully at ease, appeased from guilt
by a sanctified brutality.

That End

**That end was a sound,
a sharp breeze that cracked
the funeral casket.
What love could happen, happened
then expanded thick and buttery
like a pleasant dream stirring
in the early morning hours.
I held your hand and you glittered
with a beautiful depth fully your own.
That end was employment
into a purposeful labour, meaningfulness
hitting hard and sideways.**

**Your hands are an intellectual's, tender
as they have always been.
The concrete blockade is past us.
The foul scent repeating-shame has gone away,
replaced with an uplifting aroma.**

**We belong to each other, on the edge
of this unexperienced ecstasy, starting to bud,
flesh-out, claim our place on the stem -
fed from the anchored richness below and from
the pure colouring-sun, witnessing.**

Zen Walk

**Release the washing
and just set sail.**

**Born from hurt and from frustration,
the dirt upon you will never come clean.
The battle within the game
will play out the same - body parts
will deplete then start to pile.**

**Make an impression outside the circle,
foiling the laws that hold you in place,
declaring your place on the mound.**

**None of it is real
if you don't want it to be.
Even death will not free you from
the heavy grip, not from the debt accumulating.
Only an angel's vision, the one Jesus revealed,
only setting sail, releasing your assignment
will release you.**

**Simply love and let go
of expectation. Master
waiting, listening, waiting.**

**The animals know this -
taking, giving,
freely
void of gratitude
immune to resentment.**

Bread & Fruit

**Under the deed
the golden intention is hidden
willing to conquer
made-up realities,
fantasies drooling into the brain.
I asked for hope and was given
great love. Although exhausted
I can still reply authentic,
even with enthusiasm.
Honour is pronounced as natural integrity.
Feasting on the yolk, a time when
childishness is reduced to non-consideration,
and even gone are aggressive jealousies and
the rules of the perpetually damned.**

**Now you are in the sun
like in a dream you have dreamt of for so long.
Strong and capable, the power of liberty
blazing through your pours, into
the rivers and into the seas
everlasting.**

Bound to

**Tear apart tomorrows' boundaries
and be identical to water,
taking your cue for movement from the wind.
The same way self-respect is chiselled at
by compromise, poverty seduces the mind into despair.**

**Let it heat up. purify and find a harmony
unusual in its longing and continuance.**

**I loved you but now I have no urgency or desire.
You are yes and also no.**

**I can't say why I can't hear your music or live
advancing a future beneficial to the eternal stream
and to myself personally.**

**I don't know why futility clings
to me like a barnacle, latching on, lingering
one day to the next, crusting my skin
unrecognizable.**

**I have no solution to eradicate this quagmire
or wash myself of this fiction and allow your reality
to take hold.**

**The same way life has lost all its questions,
colours get frayed, braided as one into
a dull flat grey.**

**I see only flaws and the inevitable fate
of those flaws.**

**I cannot lift myself or script
a worthy chapter.**

**Tear this apart and take me under,
to witness life bulbous, translucent and
so far removed from my bony heavy mass.**

**I cannot labour here another day,
brooding in defeat.**

**I cannot love you and I need help
to love you again, feel my dismemberment
dwarfed, unequalled
by your mercy.**

What is

**What is the end
but a decision made
on a balcony, in a storm,
in solitude - evoking the
eternal and finite as one, in one
swift movement?**

**What is peace
but a landscape
with satellite trees and a warm moon
caressing the grasslands and the river
beside the grasslands humming
the electric-nerve sound
of its existence?**

**What is the beginning
but emptiness
after a flood or a fire, giving back
to God what has always been God's
and then standing, maybe stepping,
free and unprotected from gravity
and from time?**

**What is it now
to watch my mother changing,
deteriorating, needing more and more,
hurting more and more?
To be privileged to love her, to be
her sun and star and the daughter
her great soul deserves as it readies
to depart, as it takes this journey -**

**pitching clear one minute and confused
the next, underlining the creases in books,
reading out loud the words of our Jesus -**

**grace so grand and divine, it is terrifying
for both of us, knowing what is ahead,
trusting that great love to carry her
mercifully, and even tenderly,
through that final door.**

The Death Journey

My Mother's Sky

(Eileen (Lee Porter) Grayhurst 1930-2024)

The Death Journey

Space around the memories,
walking the cul-de-sac,
house to house, in a dream
where the small school stood and the field
is just the same where you linked arms
with your teacher and talked,
bright with your awakening into literature.

The trees are stronger, thicker-trunked,
living non-violent as they expand
and take up more ground.

Space from room to room and five hawks
fill the sky, then merge with the sky over the lake
and the vast line of clouds, changing temperature.

She drives her last car drive,
into this emptiness that does not hurt
but offers no comfort.

After the drive
the love in her blazes refreshed
as she sits in her lazy boy chair,
forgetting her sickness and old age,
blazes the whole scope of her magnificence,
strongest in her compassion.

This last journey we will have together.
We will overcome together until the end
and even then
there will be no ending, just a change,

space, I cannot fathom,
space added between us, space experienced
sometimes as a shedding of plumage,
sometimes, as a wasps' nest touched,
accidental unbearable sting.



**Before I remember
blank days, atheist days
that left me sombre-hard,
but these days
are brim with harrowing storms,
prayers and keepsakes infused
with intractable meaning, memories
ripe and revered as a newborn's flesh.**

**Before, my soul was below, breaking
through the body regularly, in pieces,
but these days it sits on the surface,
intact, a glass sphere without protection,
thrown and rolling, like
a lightning fuse, cracked.**

**These days there are no pointed steps,
but each day is like the first sun rays seen,
heightening my energy to be as kind and capable
as possible as the bringing pulse lives in a jar,
is taken out of the jar, and dying takes its fill,
and death runs in circles around the dream
and everything within the dream
that is real and everlasting is quenched
when the days are these days
sober and groaning, rising
break-and-fall, cresting hard
with this shining golden sharp
hurt, breath-taking.**

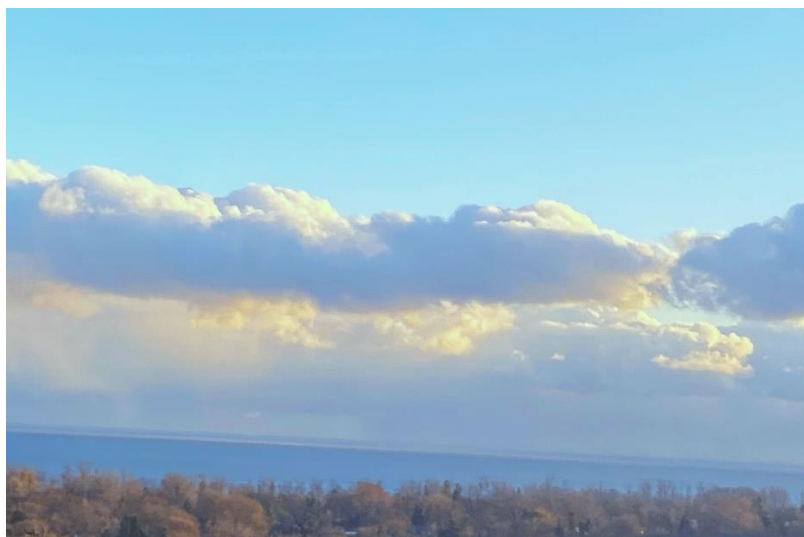


**Tricky blood dripping
into upper wall cracks,
through the grout tracks
and into winter's foreboding
months ahead.**

**How does it take so little to examine
the underside and know it is rotten,
flesh covered but disintegrating
underneath?**

**How many hands have to wash
at the same sink until the basin gets cracked
and the taps only release a trickle?**

**Tomorrow is today is
a slow-moving line bruised
with intensity and trauma,
clothed in brackets that shift then fall
then plateau before they fall again.**



What seems unending
will end and when it ends
an ocean of emptiness will
consume. The dragon's nest
will be disturbed and
heat will flow its lava-reach and hot depth
into the ordinary, the extraordinary
and everything in between.

This star is imploding into a vacuous
vacuum-suck and spiral break, spinal break
that breaks any chance for mobility.
When it ends it will be my end,
orphaned, no hidden curses, icons will be broken,
and saints will be laid bare, naked, exposed before God.

So end, my mother, but do not end,
be like a songbird blasting her song
before the sun even rises, glorifying,
and watch the heavenly bodies
surrounding, lifting your soul gently,
transforming you naturally
to breaststroke through
sun-bearing ridges
rising, dipping
divine dimensions.



The backside of the shadow
is awake, and losing ground again
burning in the sinkhole, into
a conclusion of harsh hard
cause-and effect.

Eyelids lower, sleep is never rest
but a patchwork horror-show
of violence and loss and things
once perfect, stolen
behind locked doors.

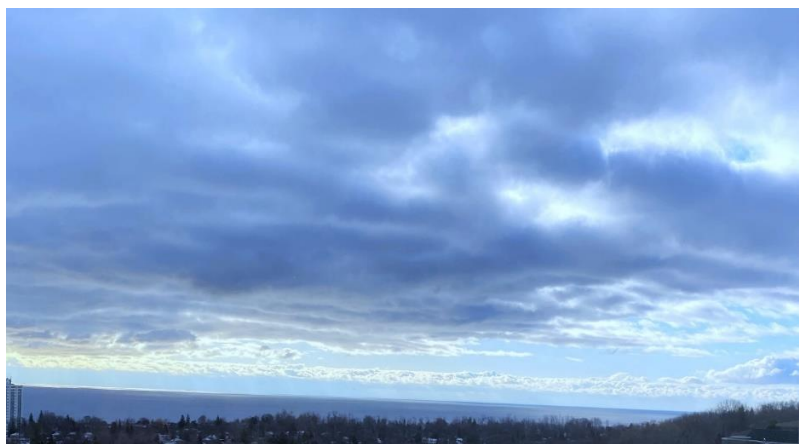
Underground, the circus continues
and I will never find my way out
of this mirrored maze.

I know that if I lie flat in the stark silence,
mortal eroding flesh is inevitable.

Extravagant love always has a price.

The price owed has been paid and I must leave
the turning circle, step past the fissure-groove
and sink into a faith abiding.

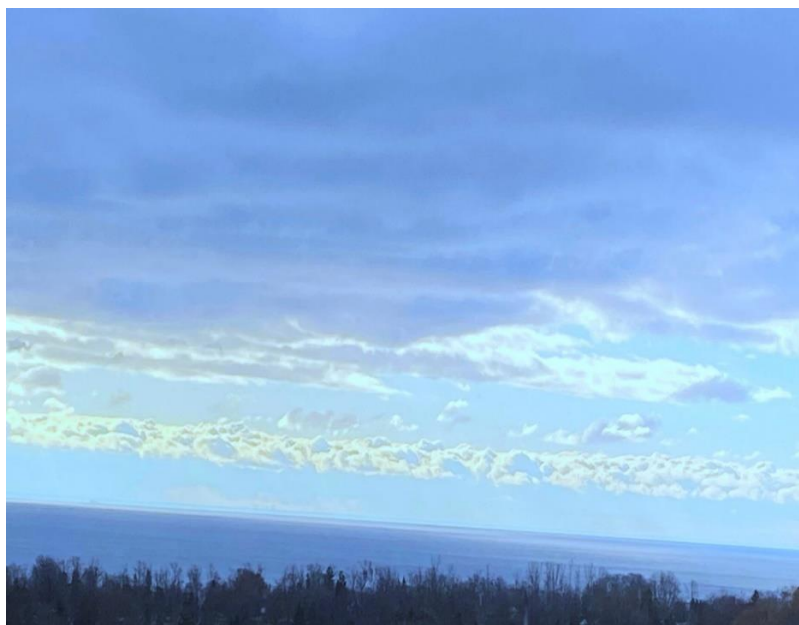
I will walk with you reckless
over this abandoned lake,
skipping across veiled skin ice,
thinning, seeing through, skipping,
and somehow never a crack will form
and never your toe nor my heel
falling through.



**The smell of worms.
A feast that rages inside
the system-nerves, taking
the body to extreme outerspace,
thresholds of reason
and waiting in the death-year
the year of exhaustion - one day brushed
with energizing hope, and the next,
crumbled, withdrawn.**

**What is deception in this playing field?
What is an honest ascent that will also
echo into the roots and stay there?**

**The distance to carry this weighted reality
is unknown, the duty within it, and the love,
is immediate and unquestioning.
So I stay, pressed against the mountain,
pressed against this aching uncertainty.
Pressed and moving and mourning
each conversation, trusting
that the sharp pointed misery
will not pitch, that peace will expand
until peace overcomes.**



Arrow stream
in between existences
splashing between shores,
forced to confront her ancient
criticism that has wrapped
my mind-frame and grown
a shadow as cumbersome
as a heavy chain.

This land she demands me to walk on
crowns me with gruelling labour,
hijacking my dignity and sense of equality.
It is a constant place of servitude merging
with guilt and a dismissal of my strength
and true worth.

This red line drawn is crossed over,
onto hot sands without sandals.
Mine is to give but not to neuter
my prayers - rage and pity colliding.
I will give but I will not have
my music reined and whipped
and tossed like a dusty bag
with the rest of the clipped toenails.

I will tell her what I cannot tell her,
by not owning her hierarchical demands
as I give, as I am placed within
this imprisoned place
as her sickness and drug-induced mania
takes control -
her petty compulsions incurable,
but my love for her
so much more.

*Kaleidoscope flaming,
her eleven colours remaining
mixed and pure and still swirling,
undimmed
by suffering's panicked toll*



Too much dust and debris
filling the vents, my lungs.
Twisted plots of imagined problems
flung across the river without
factual explanation.

So I endure and I count my numbers
to hold in my anger, hold back my tears
and keep doing the soft servitude and
diligent care I am accustomed to,
instead of doing what I want to do -
withdraw, fold up and out
for at least a good week.

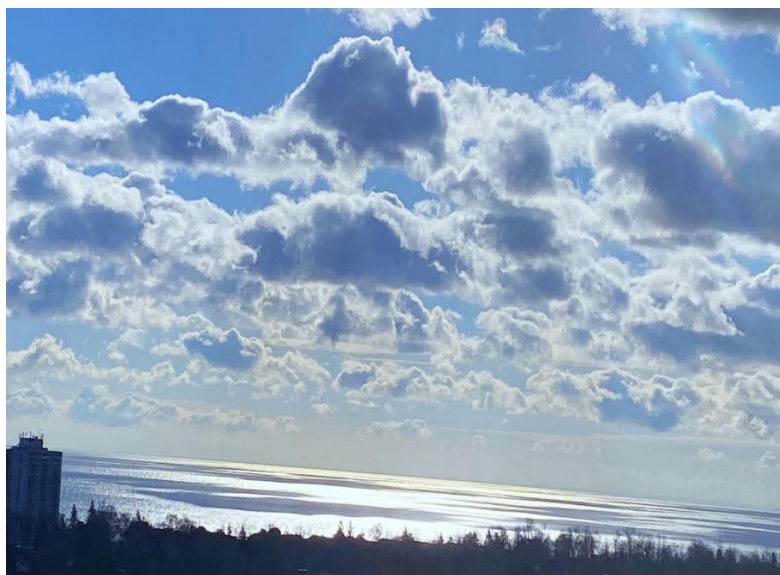
Too much drug-induced insanity whispers,
whispering accusations that hold no water,
but cut and kill just the same
all my good will, my enduring effort
and my exhausted heart that believed at least
it has kept itself true.

The crow almost hits the moving car,
almost goes under the wheel. Instead
it somersaults and avoids being clipped
by inches, flying in front of the car window,
raised away by maneuvering a mounting wind.

Too much blood without redemption.
Too much condemnation for a false claim,
a winter blank and brutal,
not of my own making.

Remember, remember -
the crow caws and reverberates
into the white cells, red cells
or your bloodstream -

**Remember
God gives nothing easy,
nothing worthy of keeping
that doesn't first eviscerate
before reseeding
your radiant core.**

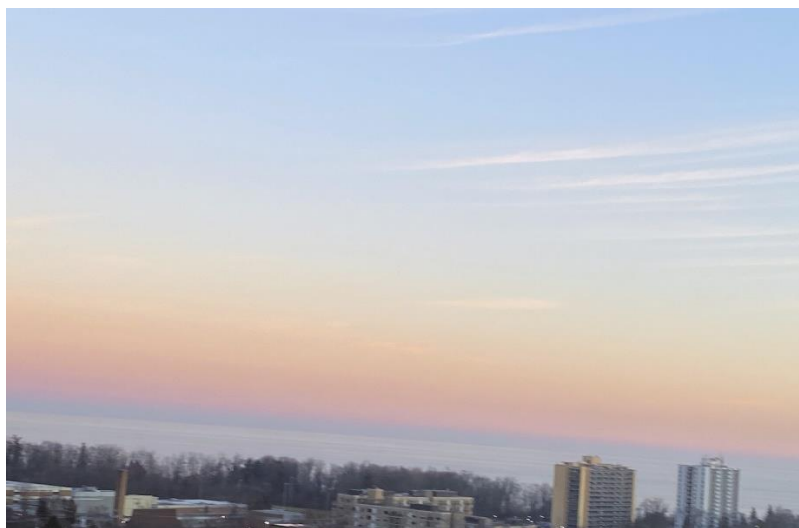


**How can I rock
between the eaten bread
and the rotten leftovers,
filling plates with putrid smells
and locked-in rage that rages in
an insomniac relentless punch
and tilt - twisting the bowels,
concerned only with petty victories?**

**How can I keep my self open
while needing full-on protection
from her drug-induced distancing eyes?**

**How can I live through another day
of exhausting intensity, with unveiled
shameless fears filling space and
the brutal-swerve
of a lingering inevitable?**

**How can I hold on until the end
hold out until permission is granted
to at last collapse flat out,
unfold, fold?**



**Last days, these days
roll like a slow-moving stone
across a stony terrain -
many bumps, inclines, declines
and turns.**

**Last days, restless then at peace
then restless again
as limitations close in so only
the essentials remain.**

**Last days are these days
soaked with this blazing wound, continuing.
These days there are no more plans
but to live through the days letting in
the undefiled grace that rises like vapour at dusk
through the balcony-door crack,
through her smile which she still manages occasionally,
keeping pace with the clawing hunger for relief
and the undercurrent smells of sickness.**

**These days are the last days
I can love you,
and how I love you, my mother -
your bright sailboat stalled
in the maw of this menacing wave
surging.**



**It is clear
that finally we are
adopted into the universe's time frame,
that time is not counted by cards
or the constellations.
Clear that light is not light-weight
but heavy
when it transforms.**

**Cracked leather belts tighten like nooses,
dreams crack then shatter and scatter
their fragments down the drain.
God is in the laundry room.
God is in her laboured respiration
and in her smile she now only shows
to strangers.**

**It is clear dying is not death.
It is its own journey -
a body breaking, a soul struggling
and losing
no matter the effort
to keep itself here, whole.**



I wish I was a snail
robbed of its shell, squished
underfoot, drying up in the
sun
so all that was left
of me was a thin crust of skin
that found its way into pavement pores,
and I could be disintegrated, be no more.

I wish I had no responsibilities
but to my solitude, my own thoughts
waking and sleeping.

I wish I never tried to love
because now I know
I have failed at love, to love,
to be strong when open, protecting
not only from the outside but inside too,
taking on others' spiritual burdens,
not out of kindness
but out of cowardice and the delusion
that the world is anything but
a lulling zone of harsh beggary
and bully imagination.

I am a broken toy kicked to the curb.
I am nothing. I have nothing and
I wish I was a snail, dried up,
sensory-dead, flat
and inconsequential.



**I don't know how to sing.
My legs have become old
and there are no more believers
around me.
Clasped in a never-opening lair
with active lava and no windows,
I cannot find the cave through the narrow incline,
trapped, submerged.**

**I cannot sing or breathe or be here
as I am broken down
bloodied and maimed.
I cannot continue to move,
pretend the feeling light is inside me
when it isn't, when most days
I wish it was over and the throne of my failure
would burn with myself along with it.**

**Chaos, eroding sickness,
and the brutal cold reign supreme.
Everything I have done
is shattered in a pit
with no way to reassemble or resume.**

**I don't want to be here.
I don't want the natural law
but only God's mercy.**

**I cannot sing.
My memories are false, used-up
and dissipating.**



Exhausted like a willow tree
is exhausted after a storm
but the storm keeps thrashing
and scooping all strong things once rooted
to the ground, releasing them across
the lawn like a brick thrown to the head,
like a dream inhabited in its ghoulish
madness, running but getting nowhere.

The suffering, the need
and the love that keeps
it together but not always.
Nerves dosed in gasoline -
fire just feet away but still at bay.
Breathing for one day, taking no messages, hearing
no extreme complaints. The doors are closed.
The balcony window is open. I step out,
there is a sky and a hawk merging with the clouds.
How much more can I hold?

And then it will be over, and I will hold no more,
not her frail hand, not her scent, not her eyes
with my eyes in deep and struggling prayer,
not her body leaning into my arms,
her full weight surrendered.



A day of reprieve,
wearing a costume and getting
in a car.

A day when the light
is unhooked from its source
and no one will say why
We will just carry on as through
this distress is natural
as though it is a wave to endure
instead of a captive fall.

A day of reverie,
the last time of gathering
and playing the role
The first Christmas at her home
The first time she will sleep through
most of it.

A day that we thought would not come
with her still with us.
So we are grateful
and we take this day
putting our mourning aside
this day - a winter-solstice flower
bearing its last bloom
before the advancing frost.



After the end,
when the end comes
and speaking is useless,
her home will be a torch
blown out - her turquoise eyes,
curtained. Sorrow will open
like a jar of dragonflies, fireflies
released as one.

And even then, when resigned
to the careful truth, the separation
will ache like a phantom limb,
like a stillborn child held, kissed,
never receiving.

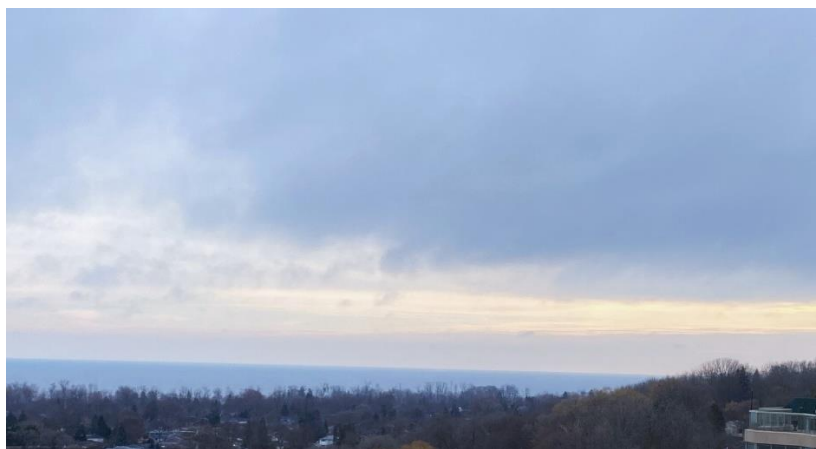
As the end approaches,
I will have to force the basics
of breathe, sleep, eat
for her sake and those around me
who love her equally as I do.
I will forget about hope
and then later I will remember
her eyes, alit with playful joy,
her summers spent on proud
adventures and the way she loved me,
never giving up, generous
as an empathetic and beautiful queen,
loving me
without understanding me
but trusting me
all the same.



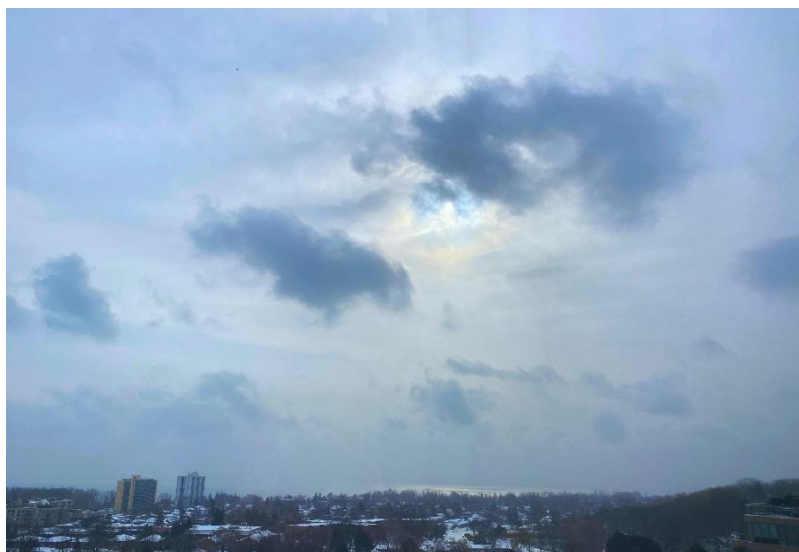
Repeating, the days
knowing a different day will only be worse,
veiling the eyelids, opening an emptiness
that will never be eased.
Repeating but not forever, but
longer than anticipated. In spite
of the great love you feel, you feel
used-up, under appreciated.
But this is her now, diseased and drugged,
does not diminish her glowing
life-long compassion, her extravagant tolerance
and kindness, connection to everyone, her softness
that still peels away the crust in an instant
when her heart is touched, when faith
is required.



Duty has made work in the garden
impossible, waking up,
a barren chore.
The mountains have dropped,
flattened out into a steady plane.
Energy I gave up as mine, came back,
surprising me with my own resilience,
stamina to hold the days together one after another
until they became months, a way of life and service.
This gift like a curse like a gift
necessary to pluck
my soul from a rut it had no awareness it was even in
until out, until forced to hold a different tune
and play it until it becomes naturally possible,
a place of unbelievable challenge met,
a place to live without
decisions, conclusions,
live as an open-end-nerve swimming
stroke by stroke upstream -
most times lit on fire,
a few times resting on the bank,
looking around
tamed, soothed.



I cry out throughout the night.
I cry for the thousands due to die
who still remain unclaimed.
A slow step through misery, with moments
intermittent of a pure turquoise glow.
A gradual waking into loss and the definite
abyss of absolute letting-go.
Mid-sleep panic that wakes
me with its red tentacle squeeze
crushing my mind,
and the steady breath I need to endure
another tomorrow.
I cry out but I keep it contained -
my flesh without hope
my spirit committed to this sacred duty
as the rest of me is battered, broken-branched
bearing, feebly carrying
one collapsed body, now another.



A kiss
A curl
a look out
a look beyond
a rosy anticipation.

All things compare to each other
in the dark gloom of dissatisfaction,
meaningless activity
reaching its zenith then back to the nadir and
spinning again.
Painting helps and even singing a familiar song
but these things do not break the loop
or contain more than a flawed and temporary ease.
Hands down, Hands open and the mind saying
now- be brave!

Love is deeper than darkness
more unexpected and varied than the checkpoints
of delusion, chaos and dementia.
Love then, widespread.
Take on that love
and place what weighs you down
into the wet cement blocks
of this unhappy nightmarish decline.

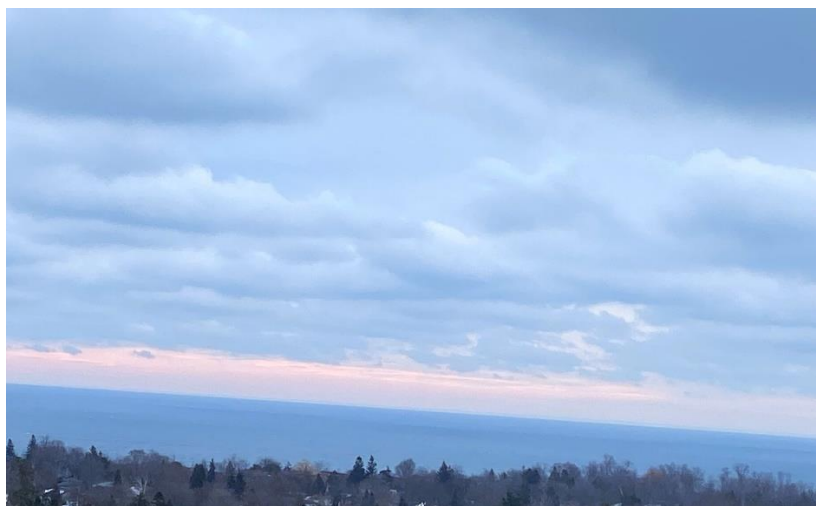
Do this and inherit
the dreamy peace
and its mortal claim.
Do this and be devoted
to good service, knowing
all else is bloodshed,
must be shed to earn your keep
and beeline your way to
a maturing discipline,
an invincible pronouncement -

**angelic terror
where only
this slender slice of light exits
to squish through,
beckoning, supreme.**



**I do not know
the treatment
the reasons
for such a grand tribulation
I have only achieved this interval
of a tiny budding joy,
a respite from the imploding friction.
I do not know if it is more than
a respite, if it is a crossing over,
a victory over infection and chronic chaotic influences**

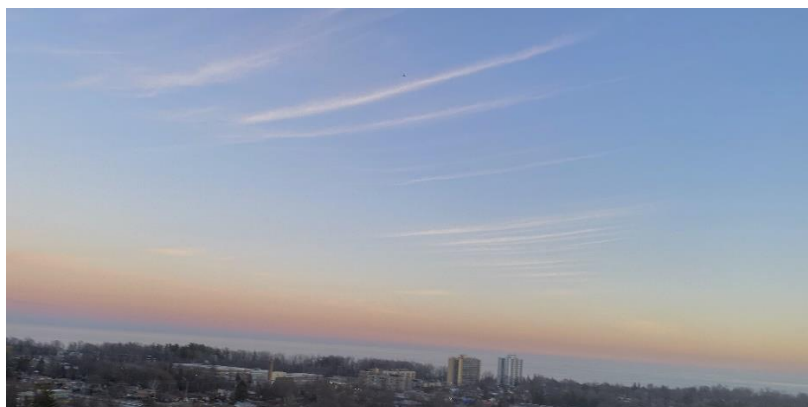
**but today she walks a little stronger, limping still
but improving her gait.
Today the Earth is this simple location,
open to the angels and to recovery.
I did not expect this calamity, collapse of
every dream, but my eyes are lifting.
I don't need a massive harvest, just food
enough to sustain and faith enough
for a mild liberation.**



**Melody screeched to a halt,
bubble big, too big, extinguished.
I relinquished my faith for answers.
Gruesomely unattractive
in full sight
in sharp black and white
immutable, I wanted
control like some want pleasure,
like one without restrictions
or moral aptitude.**

**Demons aggressively demanded my trust
underserved, making up stories
to turn failures into victories.
Hell is the steel-illusion-force of truth inverted
where there is no bowing down to the greater
authority, who is God, in charge,
unpredictable, not a pawn to use to
increase power, not a valium pill
to ease my anxiety while
traversing the treacherous unknown.**

**In that journey there is only one activity,
only faith resuscitating,
the outcome irrelevant -
a blue streak across a grey sky,
feasting on surrender.**



Sandbox throughout the vastness
take away the end of time
and I will slide like a globe,
like a planet, bursting stars
as I go, grounding suns and
drowning blackholes in my wake.

I will peel back tomorrow,
compost it into a Sunday secret
gasping for a solitude it will never find
or play-in again.

Take the hunger from Infinity and
I will be open as an abyss, spending money
like everyday is my birthday, my death day.
I will give birth away from
the tempting waters of deception
that conceal choice in hesitation
that drive the mystic to forsaken symbolism,
that pull the spine from its vertebrae, rotating
in one split-second choice,
while looking at it, desiring it, looking like
something worth the price of a soul.

Boredom demands at least a breeze,
at least a far-off flutter to speak the hope
that angels are real.
Take us out of this passageway,
underground mazes, mole homes
that imply safety. The sun is a sea lion.
We will ride beside him and he will coach
us to swerve and flip,
avoid the jellyfish and the stingray.
Meaning will pour like rain on the top
of our surfaced heads –

**a storm, this sickness, just another high wave,
just another necessity to dive deeper,
lungs and cells heavy, heavier
to avoid the overhead storm.**



Inside, full of hot nerves
sinking without the sight of tentacles
or a slice of coral
to latch onto.
Your faculties, twisted,
breaking logic into shards.
Freedom came like a larger stone to carry,
duty like a sunburn, burning, causing
the first and second layer of skin to blister.
Useless music passes, cannot be kept
or remembered. The space is traveled
knocking against corners, bruising bones
and the remains of visions.
Stings on the pads of your feet
in the white of your eyes.

Inside, we are a tall-tower rubble,
a stack of concrete broken blocks
and bodies
and grief that lasts generations.

Inside, there is a ship enticing
we cannot board,
a mutual weariness,
a ghostly outage blackout,
blinding us from seeing
sharp corners, soft cushions,
the way to retrieve
a glass
in the kitchen, on the counter
of already poured, useful water.



**Blended
into this scenery, this sick bed
and the watered-downed horizon.
It is weak with over-empathizing
tearing crusts off until all protection
is gone from my soft mushy core.
I cannot acclimatize to this grief,
her life-force-fading drawn into my own
bruised blood of doom, dooming my
own cells and strength into this unfair despair,
unsoothable scorch and decay.**

**A washing down after every visit, care-day
so I do not mimic the symptoms
of death and dying and the aching
anguish of helplessness.**

**This path will not lead
to a garden but to a cliff,
a farewell without ever coming back.
Each step toward the edge is torture
when taken, is forced not taken because
there is no standing still against it,
no turning around, the inevitable is absolute.
This path is darkness, and this darkness
is complete love - heavy, high above,
a terrifying incarnation.**



Turn to me, I turn
skinned,
striking a blow
to the inner circle.

My soul is a peanut,
two parts, shelled, asymmetrical.
Unity is divine, to kill
is never excusable or brave or
holy.

The bloodwind is the wind
that turns to defeat every journey
in disaster.

Take a mouthful - swirl the grey slime
of decline and the sharp spikes
of uncertainty, to swallow and know this
is what is meant to be
and what you have is this moment
to love and this moment again
to love
and the rest is not worth one thought,
is too much to take in,
so take in and yield to its power.



**Chips of clear and broken glass.
Will I make this destiny-duty
intact or burn out on a hospital bed,
drained to the point of no return?
The stones are joy. I keep my smile
pressed on, my impatience under breath
and my dignity on a wire - pulled and tugged
by her unnecessary necessities.**

**When I am tired
the guilt pores in like
castor oil, down the wrong pipe
into the windpipe as I struggle
to regain our once synchronized flow,
but it will not return or rewind, as her love
only shows in momentary flickers now
before she dives again into these catacombs
collapsing.**

**She is owned by the morphine
pumping into her bloodstream
at regular intervals, pumping its purpose
to nullify her pain, while twisting mental foreign
tracks through her brain that torture her
with their relentless sticky grid
and serpents' faces rising, telling her
she is owned, robbed of her
treasured independence, confined to home,
watching her once happy socializing light darken,
and you love her, you know her. You know**

**for a while
the monster will chomp at the moon,
will take the glow from her view,
soil every brilliant horizon,**

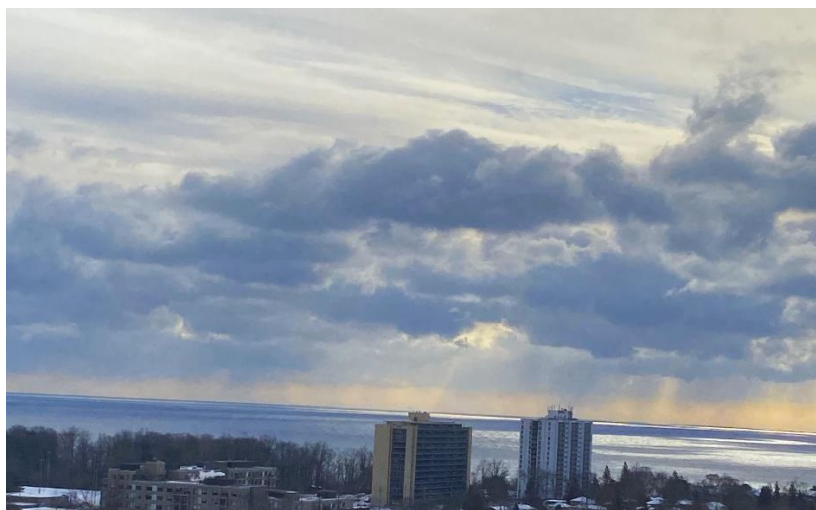
**will capture her honoured seat,
even conquer her spiritual home,
for a while
death's rotting belly
will do what it must do,
bloat and swell
foul, naturally cruel.**



**Dream-self
destiny-self
never align**

**As soon as the shackles have cracked,
a new cage has formed,
taking away the morning light,
a chance to see the phenomena
of untainted being.**

**I have fallen into usefulness
like a bottomless sewer pit, falling, nothing
broke, just the drain of gravity in my bones
as I fall, lacking
the gift of appreciation and the possibility
of a safe landing.**



**Selling parts secretly owned
but never named. Scraping off
the daily dread to find a hope.
Hoping her suffering soul
will be reconciled in a flash,
unscathed when the new one begins,
budding, blooming into the opening,
the center of the ring,
enveloped in tenderness eternal.**

**Then the peace she gained by her natural
good heart will expand and blot out her
anxieties, her struggles for control.**

**She will be unharmed, in a state
where joy overwhelms with a constant
ecstasy sustainable and God is beside her
within her and all around her, swirling, caressing,
like God has always been, only now with a certainty
that even the most faithful servants
(inside time
inside gravity)
have never known.**



Purely dying
like the universe
bottoming out,
letting it all go into
a sinkhole oblivion.

Purely fear of losing
the definite, the breathing lungs
in the body on the bed
and the heart-seized and blind from
its atomic power.

Purely God
holding the stick and strings,
concealed and blanketing,
preparing her soul for this
divine beginning.

The hall light is dim.
The curtains rustle forward.
Her eyes, once wet with anxiety's tears,
now see the angels surround, the truth
of boundless love, for her, for all.



**Last days
Dark days
dangerous death
at my doorstep,
swinging its hips to-and-fro.
Burning body, cracked, gnawed
away by insect bites, rodent bites
and the big blackhole open-mouth, forsaken.
Take what you must, but take it now,
swiftly, cover the core and the extremities
with your weight and then lift that weight
into the light of the sun, glorious
as a sparkle-water-wave-ripple
and a solitary hawk merging with the horizon.**

**Let her go like that hawk, pure in spirit
as she is, kind and soft as a child as she is.
Let her go into a dream that turns from
a dream into heaven's threshold,
where she crosses over filled with your glory,
and my father looking on
with steady, welcoming eyes.**



Outer nerves,
the madness of rise and decline,
undulating like an erratic wave,
the body joined to the illusion,
to past conclusions
and repetitive patterns remolded but unchanged.
Anxiety and intuition smudged
into one dim light.
I bow to the blowing wind, to the ignorance of now.
I hold her hand more now than I did as a child.
Tears rest for a while but lack any regulation.
Slow as a sloth but unpredictable as a storm.
Each day expends
what once was a normal week of energy.
Downward is the secret.
Bend in the direction of whatever gives.
The night is full of apocalyptic dreams,
solar flares and precautions, preparations
to minimize the coming death-blast charring burn.



The night season comes
and Earth is mine to hold,
witness its mark
and its gathering decay
while you sleep in an unconscious
darkening - skin around your mouth
turning blue, and inside that open circle,
inner lips peeling rice-paper fine
and your tongue like a dried log, that I keep sponging,
trying to saturate and regain its malleable form.

Your eyebrows twitch in what the nurses
promise me is not pain, promised me
you are comfortable
even though
for three days and three nights you
have lingered in a grizzly dehydrated shadow-stasis.

These days are like years, ripping away my trust,
my faith, my understanding of mercy,
solidifying the power
of bone-chiselling dread.

I love you, more in your helplessness,
in your patience for the final command, lingering,
red sores forming under your eyes,
fingers cold, purple pale and never grasping.

I stay with you in that place, even when
I sleep, I never sleep without you with me.
I love you and I hurt for you
and I want your release from this
brutal collapse of your form.

**Why or even how you are lingering so long,
even the doctor can't say.
I think you are buffering us from the pain of your loss
I think sometimes maybe mercy burns
hotter than punishment.**

**And these times
life surpasses understanding,
when the bottom current over quicksand thins,
breaking the chrysalis, clearing the way
for an unwanted redemption.**



**I am lifted
Blood on a field Blood in a cloud
and then so many
streams flowing, unassuming.**

**I take your hand, lean
over you and kiss your forehead,
weeping, praying, saying
again and again I love you, thank you.
Your breaths are short, coming from below
not from your chest, but from your deepest gut,
stillness, ease, a letting go.**

**I drop like a bird on your shoulder.
I know you are leaving. You know
it is a beautiful alchemy, accumulation
of a life so gloriously lived. I tell you
to take Jesus' hand and he will take you
to the golden tender light of eternal heaven.
You take his hand, and God
has become the atmosphere,
encapsulating, removing time.**

**Your last breath is more
a soft sigh than a breath,
not a cross-wind of struggle,
not a brush-stroke of "But wait.."
You are gone.**

**Seagulls fill the view from the window,
circling, joyful in their angelic form.
You are free.**

**My heart has merged with yours,
forest blue, deep and rich and forever.**

**My mother, my powerful ally,
friend for all ages - goodbye,
the six-month journey to this point
was treacherous, the last weeks, tortuous,
but these final moments were divine,
was God's grace in full view, mercy
that healed all pain gone before,
resurrection visible like spread-out water lilies
or Elysian Fields, sublime.**

**My mother, the sky is again yours,
embracing the seen and unseen spectrums.
Your sky is prophecy, feeding
the bedrock and the water's reflection,
all parts proved sacred, identical
to the immutable moving whole.**





(Eileen Grayhurst aka Lee Porter and Marilyn Monroe) 1952



(Eileen (Lee) Grayhurst 2005)

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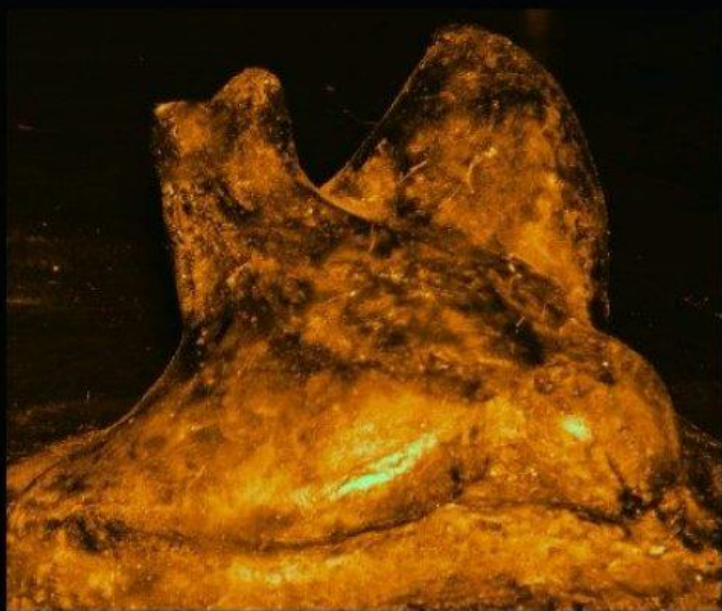
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The Sparrow Wars

The poetry of *Allison Grayhurst*



Allison Grayhurst

The Sparrow Wars

Allison Grayhurst

Edge Unlimited Publishing

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The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst
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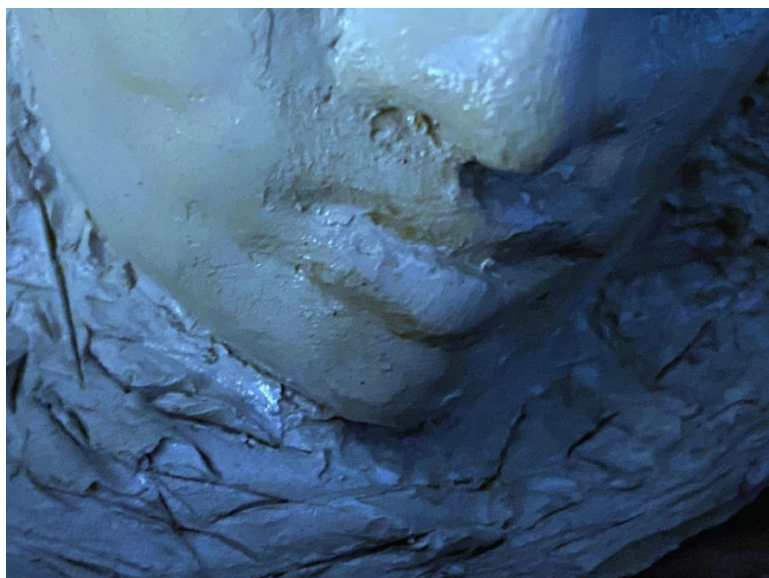
“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God,” Jesus.

Sparrow Wars

I

**Sludge water dripping
into an already clogged pipe.
Blood in my microscope, torn out
like a diary page, necessary to
analyze the ingredients.
Will the wound lift? be inverted
into a creative windstorm or
a nemesis spread,
spidery-vein spreading
until the curse is complete
and conquers?**

**I know love is alive,
and that hot and sudden
is the joy that stems from a miraculous shift.
I know building comes with the morning,
comes like brimming sorrow and goes
to a final destination like all things final,
temporary, broken and sliced down the centre -
undergoing a brutal mitosis.**



II

Empty tables
clawed apart within
with spikes a-blazing on the edges,
and the light of the moon
high in the sky,
hardly visible.

Time is a dust heap I roll inside of,
never making a dent
or relieving my extremities from
the grim cover.

Beaten by the relentless overwhelm
and the digging dream that digs further down
more than ever before, pulled in by
gravity unspeakable and charged.

Living each day bent over, cane-walking,
repeating anguish, shooting pain and dough-bread
kneading, never baking, never
consuming.



III

When grief comes
it comes at the maximum degree
of chaos, doubt and all things
unsustainable.

Even there, in the squander and grave
disadvantage, I will surrender to trust,
protect the embryo of my new understanding
as precious as it is,
as the only intention worthy of holding,
clinging to despite the toxic smog encircling,
twirling over my extremities, nose-diving into
my internal organs, shutting me down.

It is there and its power is the past, old.
It is able to kill but I am not afraid.
I hold the jewel of this glowing budding faith
and that is all I will look at.

My heart is crushed, undone by the weight of grief
but my soul is tiny blooming. Let it be key.
Let everything be where everything needs to be.
Both are real. Only one will have authority
and receive my attention, elixir formed, a trickle,
ingested.



IV

Drum beat

no beat

I raise my arms

and scream hosana.

The drawers are empty

hunger parts my soul

into quarters. Stand up

and take account, no one

is listening.

Four months of stagnant emotion,

upheaval at the roots, planted again

somewhere less familiar and less fecund.

Faith and despair overlap, cross paths, join

together as a new entity.

Who understands? There is no understanding

to be had, only the ceramic bird on the shelf, winking,

and the air, heavy and humid one minute

and cold, oxygen-free, the next.

In my mind is an argument

existential, without possible resolution.

In my core there is shock at the terror

of disintegration, and for how long?

How much more? And still there is more.

In my being, I knew God

came with mercy, with Jesus and the peace

of infinity - washing clean, a soft joy

without degrees but only flowing, showering, eternal.

In between I wake up and I cannot see forward,

I listen, but I cannot be one with what I hear.

**Holy Spirit, holy, do not escape me,
be clear, re-construct my devotion,
find me my union seed, to plant and tend to
simple devotion.**



V

Jesus, you let me live.

**I will sit with you
hand in hand.**

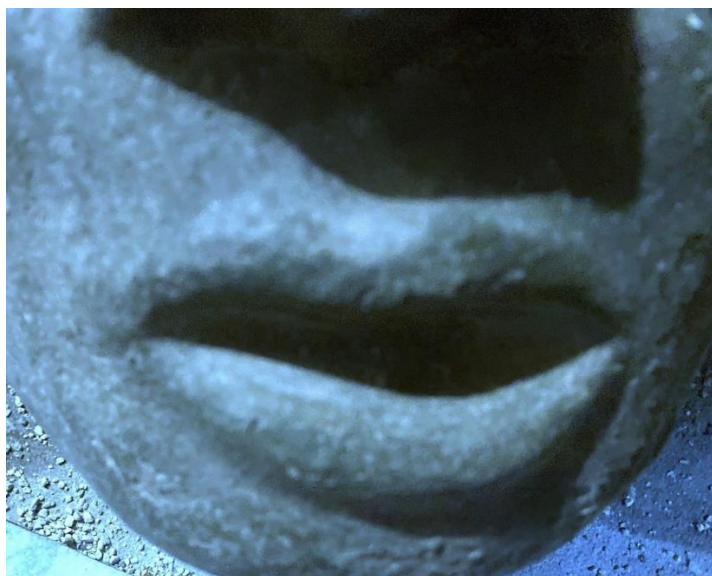
**I know you
in my personal crisis -
faith obliterated, reseeded
in a lucky garden.**

**I will trust you with all my problems,
with my anxiety like a dysfunctional
city, polluting the roadway, the airway
with its violence and indifference.**

**I will breathe easy, knowing you are here,
that you own it because I give it to you
and reckoning is rescue, in your hands,
miracles are coming - life changing,
a kinship with your divinity.**

**You are sovereign, my still-point, my doorway
into perpetual redemption.**

**I will collect the fruit and sit beside you,
eating together - no hunger, no hurry -
You and I, I with you, you
holding my hand.**



VI

When I see the unseen
in a twisted longing
death-circle fantasy,
irresistible hope,
and drive to make that hope happen
even though
I am not a citizen of that land,
not meant to come forward
and shine with those deeds,
then I fail and live for an
illusionary future, creating a
hellish now, ripe with lack
and disappointment.

Bend on your knees, bow
to the one-name of God,
feel the slap of sobriety,
the consequences of depending
on your own wit and power
which is like a gnat trying to cross through
a tornado or a choir that sings without
glorifying.

I am learning that being conceived
and being re-conceived
is the cure for fear, the fire
that watches a greater fire,
burning enough,
releasing enough
to rejoice and just burn, a light, a warmth
transient, but elementally,
in this way, everlasting.



VII

**It is hard to hold purpose
when purpose no longer holds you
when the single curtain seals the window
blocking the sun and sky,
making you blind so you only touch corners
and never a door.**

**All things lost their ownership, just wandered
aimless, squandering energy like tossed pebbles,
no pattern, sinking.
Governance failed, was only an imagined
corridor leading to a chaotic marketplace
that doled out meals, lacking nutrients and staying power.**

**Each shape to take and hold and shift from each day
was hard labour, exhausting to perform,
pretending hope existed when hope had abandoned.
I was not afraid because my fears
were pushed hard into my face,
swelling my eyes so they could only see behind.
Death won out over the light, won obedience -
the middle and opposite, smelling.
Death smells bad
smells like an inevitable succumbing
to rot, betrayal, rendering
endurance useless
and even the holiest of faiths debunked.**

There is a string before me,
thin and golden and unbreakable.
There is something I see I never saw.
I have collided with the consuming tyranny death,
felt it swerve and twist through
every vein, enter, break my heart,
break the truths I had before.

The string dangles,
dripping down from
my inadequate cries
and a mangled prayer,
comes shining a faint intermittent glow.
It is small and so am I, minute,
hardly there, but there.



VIII

If I talk again,
I will keep my end-mind twisted
so it cannot speak or formulate
a plan.

I have no constitution for plans
or wherewithal for achieving
human-made provisions.

If I talk again,
silence me into prayer,
conversing only with the angelic order,
strengthened by devotion and the power
of obedience.

If I try to be a player,
remind me of my meek capacity,
sting me with regret and slap me
into a state of surrender.

If I try to enter a world not my own,
laugh at me, call me out
and put me in my designated low-chair place,
a dreamer, advancing
no further.



IX

Falling away like before
launching water at the moon
then releasing it, scattering it
onto a lifeless surface.

Songs and singing are murderous,
selling the false business of a buffet
inspiration, and poetry, like a sober
prayer or pleading, blossoms in a place
where no one comes or looks or even cares.

Things that once stretched
with divine determination towards health,
now fall backwards into addiction and defeat.
Chaos always hovering at the entrance door,
violence a few footsteps away.

Idealism once trapped in my mind has sieved through
incrementally and now in my mind, a faint flow
of tainted possibility, mostly consumed by despair, mostly
non-existence, more hesitant than youthful,
more resigned than risking.

The days drive on the same,
and how I wish I was in a state
of conspiratorial superiority
or in a social bliss of nonchalance.
How I wish I could be like I used to be,
believing despite the odds,
calling for help and receiving it.

**What is this weakness,
this futureless waste of now,
pressing on all my joints,
an aching misery perpetual?**

**What are these days
when I can find no hope
to master this tortuous doom?
I am removed. A thin slice everywhere
between me and reality. Only sorrow brings
me near enough to touch, only happiness lives
inside my dreams or in my memories,
stripping the peel from the fruit,
dropping it to rot in the mud-marsh with the rest
of my wearied hold on merciful possibilities.**



X

**I don't see
the far-reaching joy
to build a future on,
just disappointment, false-starts,
isolation and how-can-that-be?
I don't see
but I know the builders take their time
to make sure what needs to be aligned
is aligned, that broken hearts can
become hardened hearts
and hope is dangerous for those who are desperate,
perishing at the foot of the mirage.**

**But there is a noble prophesy to follow,
to stand by and wait for.
There is true love, love that alters bitter grief
that wraps your love in its healing balm until
it blooms and your dry throat is
finally soothed, your wounds are rewarded,
transformed into strengths exposed,
safe on the marriage altar.**



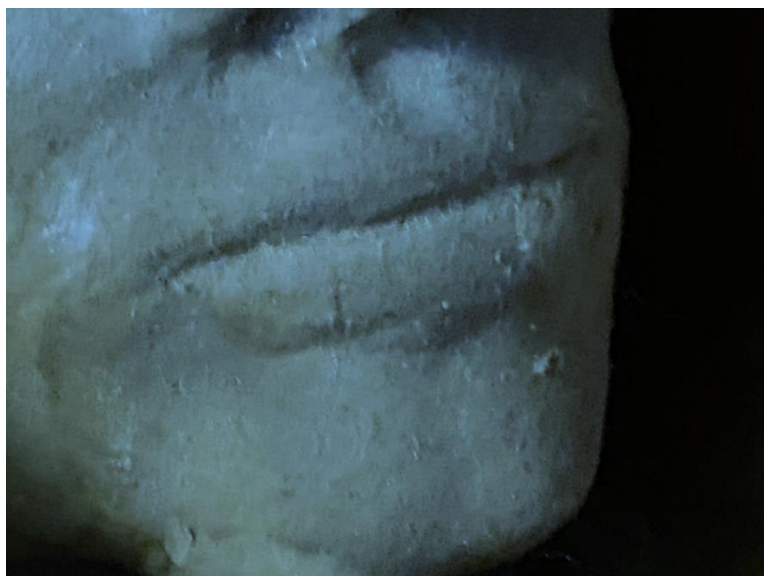
XI

**Time does not help
to lessen the sharp scream
of amputation, or to help gain
a way to cope, maimed as I am,
lacking resilience.**

**Prayer does not answer
any questions or bury the emptiness
outside of my body, allowing
room that can be filled, even with only
a faint groaning microscopic creation.**

**Love that sits beside me,
day-after-day, holding my hand,
stays with me - miraculous devotion -
helps while it is there,
but does not stop the welling-up of sorrow,
that will not ease or be appeased
in solitude or by distraction.**

**Faith is a word that sparks
but cannot ignite. I sink down again
on my broken knees. I cannot rise.
I try and I try, but
I cannot overcome.**



XII

**God do you love me?
Everyday I fall short
of receiving your love,
blocked and stalled and wading
knee-deep in sewage mud.
I cannot take a step. I cannot
hear you anymore or
feel your mercy move the spoke
a mile, an inch, a fraction of
a way out of this criminal sleep,
arrested every day.**

**I try to take a breath,
try to step but I cannot
move. Please God, show yourself
to me again. I am aching all over,
joints on fire, mind - ablaze in jet-fuel burning
heat, tired all the time, cut off
from your glory.
Cut off no matter my prayers
and my pleas.**

**Please God, take my hand,
recognize me as one of your own.**

**I long for you.
I need your grace
to lift me, now,
trumpets calling,
advancing, only with you,
loved, permitted.**



XIII

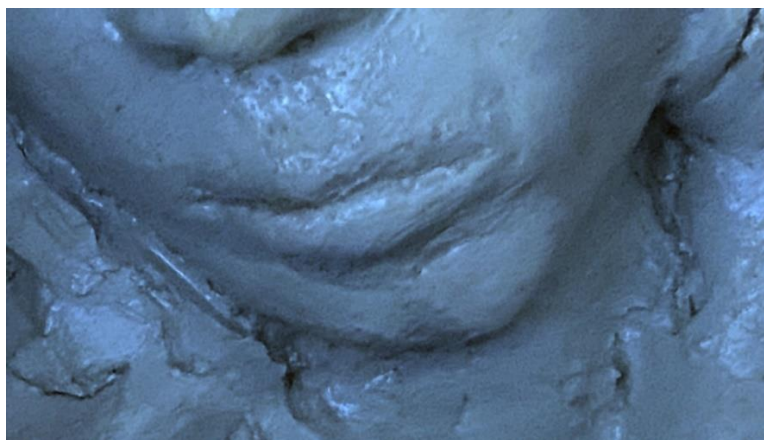
**A hive blasted
by poison.
A blood-letting
in crave of a cure.
Two close-together cliffs
jumped across, looking
closer than they are.**

**In the whirlspin of a fall -
arms broken, extremities blasted,
crying out for someone from the angelic order
to swoop down and placate the pain.
But no angel-being arrives and what is broken
remains broken, deformed and starting to heal
that way, into a permanent liability.**

**Even then, when stuck thigh-deep in forsaken ground,
God is close, washing our cracked bodies,
cradling our defeat, saying**

**My Love doesn't always answer with a clean slate
or a put-on spell so all hurt is forgotten,
not a trace left traceable. Sometimes
My Love just sits with you, beside the pain,
lets you know I am here,
here, in the empathetic love of others,
here, in your own resilience each morning to carry on,
here, in your determination to stay close to me**

as you anguish and ache,
unable to walk or fully wake,
seeing that nothing turned out
the way you saw it
in your times of highest harmonic resonance
the way
you were sure it would.



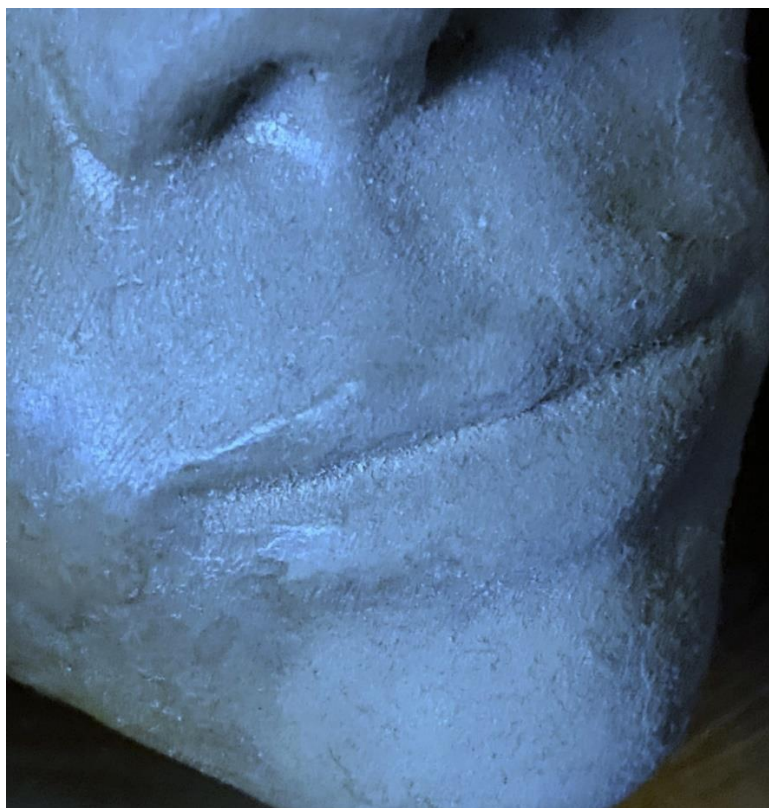
XIV

**Will you speak to me again
like before death cracked my windpipe
like when death still hovered thick in the air
but you were there surrounding everything
with the weight of your love?**

**Will you answer me again
cooling my shape, giving back force
to my petering-out flame
so I can grow again, still tied to your mercy
and the joy of having dreams?**

**Will I know you again
despite my mutations
and the iron that rotates sickeningly
in my core, using my energy
for lesser aspirations?**

**Will you love me again
and I will know that love
igniting its current through
my every predicament,
bonding me unbreakable
to your side, inside
your privileged embrace?**



XV

First thing,
you are here.
I wake up and we are talking,
merged in a matter-of-fact
conversation. My need, my only way
to take a step in the morning.
More and more, without you, I can't
exist or comprehend a thing.
Then why this endless desert, the
hard bloated boils erupting
every time I move?
How is it, you are here, but there
is so much pain still, so much struggle
just to keep alive?
How do I feel so close to you and need
you more than I ever have, have you
more than I ever have, with such
drought and trembling-burns burning everyday,
throughout the days, echoing - no medicine, no food,
just you and I in this high heat,
where I am barely capable,
but somehow capable.



XVI

**Then the bitter defeat
was burning like a sin
committed, recognized
and unforgiveable.**

**Then on a hill, heavy with
weighted down legs and
an injury there, debilitating but
unexplained, the challenge came
to walk.**

**Walk slowly at first, walk like
I can walk even though the reins
are dropped and I have lost my mother,
lost life's victory over death and the comfort
of an unbreakable love broken,
altered, intangible now as an angel's skin
or a hope held for decades unrealized.**

**Walk with my mortal burden, stumbling without
a path, a cane or a flat plane. Twist in my ankle, twist
in my knee, swollen, bloated with a hot fever, walk.**

**Face a direction, walk, slowly,
commit and make it my own.**



XVII

Soak the born
in their own initial conception
to remember the pure-memory-pockets,
the truth of miracles.

Underline everything that matters
and read it again until no small word
is skimmed over or taken for granted.

Open the shelter doors and let all animals
in, wild ones, broken ones, aggressive and tame.
Free with a blessing
every dream that isn't false,
and follow your deepest duty -
both desirous and undesirous divine commands.

Under the blanket, conspiracies are made.
They grow limbs that look like light but exclude
humility and the thumb-print of surrender.

The atmosphere is big,
the button-hole is small.
I am small when I toss
my self-determination out as wisdom
and fail at every turn.
Mercy comes with obedience,
obedience comes with trust, and then finally
freedom.

The dying are trapped in their wounds.
The living, in their success at survival,
but the gift is always
open for everyone, and changing
even without core movement.

I have a boat and that is all I own.
I see flowers on the shore, rooted in the sand.
I see yellow and sometimes, I see gold.



Head bowed

**The numbing curse
of resentment comes
to capture me
in its lumpy maggot-riddled
corpse, putting on my back
a burden I am aware of
I cannot keep.**

**And even though I wash and scrub,
daily cleansing myself of its
putrid stench, it returns, living,
climbing my shoulders into my hair.
I know the only clear path is forgiveness,
no matter my so-called-righteous-heart
cawing for justice. I know I will never
find peace this way, nor mercy
unless I can give it.**

**I am the one who need forgiveness
for allowing this monstrosity to suckle on
my spirit for so long.**

**I thought I was past it.
I thought I truly became a citizen,
sealing my covenant.
But it is here again,
raging like before, expecting
vindication.**

**I hope it is a ghost of its first-self,
still large but flimsy, visible
but lacking all density.
I pray I can overcome its devouring song**

**and show the love to others
that I myself have been given.**

**Open here, casting off
its angry cries,
its barbarian anguish
blocking my own way forward
into saving deliverance.**

This Place

**From a place of trust
I glimpse your magnificence,
your harnessed race of complexities
in harmony, slow moving, more
powerful than a hundred suns
conjoining.**

**From a place of faith,
being wrong is just as exciting
as being right - a longing to know
you, knowing I will never know you
only know the minute aspects that flip
and twist and rewrite as my knowledge grows,
while keeping some laws fundamental.**

**From a place of love,
your love is gathering in
bright awe-inspiring displays,
terrifying in their brilliance and
in their magnitude.
Nothing is personal. Everything is individual,
overreaching galaxies into galaxies,
twin dreams.**

**From a place of exploration,
finding inspiration
where paradox consumes,
invigorates, illuminates
all places, gloriously shifting.**

Lift II

**If I stay under ice
in a house as vast as the sea,
cut off from the sun,
I will bloat up on anxiety's quickening,
gaining nothing but a heaviness incurable
and inevitable as iron-core gravity, heating.**

**So I will lift myself up onto the sides of
the cracked ridges, gaze at the clouds overhead
and write my new name in the air.**

**Breathing is simple like God's grace is simple
and only needs to be received to be seen.
My body is a dream spinning in thirst,
banging into hard edges as it seeks
satisfaction, snatched from divinity in its
death-spread, doomed to be finite and always
hungry.**

**I love the clear riser, the way forward
when there is no way to be found.
I will be the clear riser,
rising like a bubble-balloon, escaping,
carried by the wind.**

Hubris

**Steady as logic dictates
the truth of superstitious rotation
and effect, unmask the mystic
trappings of a fated existence ritual
locked into the spinning orbs lightyears away,
locked like us to the gravity of the sun,
but no more, and if it is more,
the intricate complexities of small stirrings
would never be understood or solid enough
to set the tone for the day or for a season.
Dead art that does not evolve with knowledge
is blind art, is needed
by the desperate to feed the need
for false certainty.**

**The veil is lifted, unveiling
a more magnificent mystery, movement,
igniting the joy of undetermined, humble
exploration.**

Surrendered

**In the middle -
steady, harsh waves,
salty flavoured ocean,
stranded, treading.
Love comes smiling.
It is a ghost.
Joy comes and passes by.
Purpose comes but floats by
like a jellyfish riding the momentum.**

**In the middle, tired of treading,
no escape, just the ebb and flow, surging,
retreating waters. What lies beneath makes
no difference because nothing is above
except the burning brutal sun, cloud cover
occasionally, and only air to eat.**

**Skin cells, bloating. Eyes, unable to keep
open. In the middle
of an endless abyss, all my happy days
behind me.**

**I hold my hands in prayer position,
arms raised over my head.
I stop struggling to not go under.
I go under and let that weight, the peace
at last, take me down.**

She

**Fear is splendid
in making the body inflamed,
bloated on trepidation at the news
of many meadows burning.**

**She hurried and found a healer
inside herself, willing to go
the distance and forfeit
personal power for a greater
acquisition.
She understood the traveller and
the sit-at-homer as one in the same,
especially on a stormy day or a year of upheaval.**

**Faith is the bullseye with no point-marks gained
unless hit dead-centre, directing every focus
to only that centre.
Faith is the wave to ride to the shore,
removed from other moving sources,
like wind and arm-strokes.**

**She opened herself to fear
not denying it but seeing it
as just another entity
under the canopy, smaller
than the giving sun.**

Out

**I asked to be let out
from that unwanted accomplishment.
I asked to shed my shame, my duty
and the hard-core call of doing time.**

**It was taken down and away from me,
along with so much more.
Guilt, and worldly bondage
also fell along with security,
along with a strange, twisted pride.**

**Knuckles down, hands still folded.
In my head are ghosts of patterns dissolved
but are still haunting. Ways of being I don't have to
carry are dropped, but my empty arms are stalled
in position, humbled by uncertainty.
Set free and starting over, but not yet started,
just starting to try to etch out different
possibilities, a solid surging becoming.**

**Whiffs of passing currents,
rich aromas that entice briefly then fade.
Whiffs I cannot capture and keep,
not now, maybe never,
let out, dumbfounded,
helpless, screaming, just born.**

Star

I think if I was a trillion-year-old
star blazing, always in deep transformation,
pulling planets into my orbit and asteroids
and the tips of angel-wings, bypassing,
touching, fearless, as bright or brighter
manoeuvring with unexpected harmony

then remembering would be easy - to see
the past as a sealed perfection, no matter
how apparently flawed, to see myself
as the same

then I would vibrate in a place where there is
no guilt, no lack, and all I do
and all I can not do would be set as
a rock on a shore -
full of dents, instructions and veins
of rich (sometimes glowing) colours inside

it would be enough to be that rock
or that star - one thing, whole,
changing without struggle,
combusting or eroding
without attachment, without pain.

Slowly the builder builds

**but the miracle-maker is quick -
enormous change, dreamt-of-no-longer.
The end-result is a shock of grace
and the depths of God's power displayed,
gifted for no deserving reason but love
and the faith that the receiver
has in that love, welcoming that love.**

**Mustard seed blooming in seconds,
why look under the blankets or walk
the steady path? Matter is a wave dipping,
flowing, curvatures actualized,
only incrementally understood.
Sticky fields surrounding,
demanding interaction
as the master-builder alters creation in a blink,
with compassion stronger than a stormy sea,
stronger than death or deformity,
strongest still in the peace
of utter surrender, after cellular breakdown,
after defeat, after defiance is broken,
this love floods like a wind, gathering velocity,
gathering together proportionally all things
perfect, flawed, absolutely divine.**

Molasses-dream

**The fighting blood,
and the power
of broken bones mending.
Flip the unknowing cause of famine
and feed on faith like a summer's feast
of fruits and nuts accepted as a birthright.
Change is incremental, even the change
of death takes time to incorporate into
the nervous system, slowly inching into reality,
sometimes healing in its wake, always scarring.**

**Bedrooms are emptied, new homes are formed
with the hope of comfort and forever.
Prophecy has landed on my roof, digging under
the shingles to nest and brood.
I accept the brisk cold. I accept a soft landing.
Love never gives up
and that's the most important part of love
I have ever understood.**

Ghost

**Gone, dripping
down the drain
after a cut.**

**Gone, the sweet flavour lingering
of maple syrup on the tongue.**

**Gone like democracy from a land
conquered by a tyrant.**

**Gone like inspiration from the crushing
overtones, undertones, all-tones
of relentless grief.**

**Gone like a love that was once unique
as it was necessary, stretching her grace
over my home, my family and my faith.**

**Gone, and I have gone with it into a blackhole spin -
dream, here, there, no commitment, no connection
to the divine or otherwise, endless spin, inertia.**

**Here, a film between myself and life,
watching a screen, moving, getting involved
by remembering how, feeling none of it really counts,
feeling myself only playing a worn-out part.**

**Here, things I knew before
become nothing I know now, vulture-feeding
off my past false understanding, landing
in a heap of wet sawdust, taking forever
to make a move so I don't make any move
and just sit, watching, not even waiting anymore.**

**Gone like she is gone,
unreachable, ephemeral,
somewhere else.**

You were born

**with the light of a nebula
inside of you, natural
as your loving smile
tortured now by isolation
and a waning strength
that has your commitment
maimed and muted.
But underneath that light still surges,
cannot be snuffed out or ignored.**

**You are blessed with invincible charm
that takes up a room
and soothes every broken soul.
Do not let circumstances threaten your joy
or hold you in a world you don't belong in.
Breathe easy and expand, remember your
purpose and your birthright, swiftly
go deep, find the pulse everlasting, knowing yourself,
stretch your arms out, know it and believe.**

Much Much and Many

**I see what my eyes betray,
but see the rising healing corridor
shine and expand
to set right the direction of the wind
and the lack that keeps leaking
until more lack insults all hope.**

**I see this home delivered,
angels laughing in each corner
and the floors and ceilings are rivers
of abundance, crossing the barrier, dissolving barriers,
trusting that truth will abide like a child trusts
in extreme joy,
joy glittering on her teeth, at her tips, infectious.**

**I see the promise and I step over reality
to receive it. I am thankful, measured
by this open gate, and the onrush delight,
flooding, reaching everywhere, in.**

Milky Way

Rare soot
lengthening into
the vacuum stream
between stars.
Even more rarified, it lulls in
ghostly formations
merging on the horizon,
thicker where they combine,
overlapping bubbles, hotter
through the closed door.

Nested motions
with no net-motion
overall, a scribble
undulating, still frozen
in this position
of constricted movement.

Blue shifts, red shifts,
equal, loosely wrapped
transient by compression
wave of rotation
a surprising conflict,
rising instead of slowing,
no sharp edges,
rotation stays high
at the visible edge
and beyond, plunging
expectations only
collected by elimination of
violence that proceeds
the sucking hole.

But not so much the mystery matter
floating in free space,
a momentary amplification
that has ruled out house-objects,
tiny objects
because there is no diffused dim glow
only weakling interaction
of symmetric twins
mine shafts
ultra pure
mass but no light
in the space between.

A dramatic effect
a thin gruel
deviant light, distorted
delicate filament clusters,
ragged dusty lanes
chopping the whole field.

A congestion of information,
ingesting matter, and again
the whole of the swirling stars.

Over

**Under siege like an anthill
invaded upon by an anteater.
Summer is tainted
with humidity and boredom,
intermingled with strong bouts
of unholy despair.**

**I hear nothing when my hands
are outstretched. I receive nothing
in the hollow of the rock I am
crushed inside of and asked
there, inside of it, to be reborn.**

**Had I yearning once? Hope? Even
prophecy?
I don't anymore. For months,
caught in a sticky web transgressing
in spite of rigorous prayers,
crying all the time for no reason
but release.**

**Time's up.
Grief has become my skin, not even attached
to external loss, but grafted to my nerves.
impossible to throw off.
It is time now to tear it off,
piece by piece, and peel away what cannot be torn,
and burn what cannot be peeled or torn.**

**I'm still here, half a soul,
but still a soul
and it is time to claim my territory,
make a story and stay with it.**

**Light without heat is paint on a canvas,
illusion, no awakening.
Heat up, remembering
I am still here
and I am supposed to be here,
here, listening for a loud-screeching
spawning scream - an ink-spot struggling
creation.**

Sliding through the sewage tunnel gleam (poem in seven parts)

I

Forgotten (soon)

**Hard and cold as an ice storm
killing, hardening life
in its blanket frost.**

**The only love you keep is what
you can control. If you can't control it,
you ditch it with a kick,
with a higher-than-though mighty sneer.**

**Digger in the rocky lifeless garden,
resisting you, you claim as savage stupidity
because you claim to hold prophecy,
ancient words of a babbled dream,
zodiac tamer whipping up a storm
or a healing balm to break delusion.**

**When there is no compliance or
cheerleaders cheering,
you turn,
start character-flailing, lying, slicing into
the corners of human frailty
to etch yourself out a victory and walk away.**

Atrophied heart inside you, a high ceiling
that will go no further, cannot expand
into compassion-for-your-enemies
overflow.

Dive back into the water-pool where all who
encounter you are obedient to your command, move
to the mountain where uncertainty cannot
reach you - exchanging truths in monetary form
and claim it all as blessed achievement.

Where was your kindness, your golden glow,
when you drove a knife into my loins
before you departed,
trying to lure me into self-loathing?

Low,
like arrogance, hubris, and lying are low,
immutable as a dead thing swinging in
the wind - movement, but no breath.

Farewell friend of the seventh soldier, fallen.
I need nothing here
in your palace of falsities,
closed off from humility and the equality of grace.

You could have left without letting me know
you never had my back, that you were always
back there, clawing with judgements,
grievances.

You could have just left without the
tongue-lashing psychological deception,
just turned away without the gutting,
flipping all those years of friendship
on their side, upside down, lying
like liars do with complete certainty,
no remorse or self-doubt,

**amputating any devotion
I had left for you,
boiling its remains
on a rack of putrid oil and extremes.**

**Walk away, dragging this downed horse behind you,
into the thorny bramble of your defiant prejudice
into the fantasy of your less-than-holy paradigm, broken.**

II

Broken Glass

**Coward,
keeper of a false fixed star,
keeper of many truths,
knower of none.**

**Coward,
throwing glass into my garden.
Brutal, unnecessary cruelty so you can
own the platform as you leave,
nose stuck high in the air,
hands cleansed of any doubt or wrongdoing.**

**Coward,
incapable of walking through the mire
hand in hand, of not letting go and trusting love no matter
the centipedes writhing, the small gnawing things
and the larger creatures that scare. Incapable
of owning your own transgressions, or prioritizing
love above your frightened soul.**

**Coward
cussing a friendship because you quit,
cussing and lying and tossing the broken glass
from your high and mighty mountain.**

**Coward
with blood on your hands,
who must turn back as you leave,
thinking you'll say your piece,
but really just recklessly, heartlessly tossing
broken glass.**

III

Getting there

I am almost on the other side
(one day, second day)
where forgiveness collides
with terrible truth,
where pain is overcome with pity,
releasing my shield and cry
for human justice.

Quickly through the process
after the breaking of the sun,
after seeing the secrets you stand behind
to prop up your persona, after still,
your deliberate hurt was hurled, and after that,
ending it with pat-on-the-head platitudes,
even still, I forgive you.

I am almost there, I pray to be there, in spite of
your attempts to drown me in false accusations,
in spite of your attempts to undermine my autonomy.
I say, so be it, I am almost on the other side,
sensing a freedom, an inspiration
clearing the thicket of your malice,
almost healed of your viper-tongue lick,
your sticky twisted back-flip truths,
spiritual elitism of the highest order.

I am almost there, and I am feeling good,
relieved, now away from your succubus suckling,
away from your tight-grip surrealism,
distorting clean lines, bright glowing rivers
and intimacy.

**I forgive you. I forgive your incapacity,
your hard didactic tongue.
I forgive your small circle land, retreat
from a faith that holds faith no matter the outcome,
that part is easy.**

**But your foul lying insults
as you turned away, are harder to bear.
I will get there,
I will not carry you with me -
not your soiled diaper dripping, not a single
attempt to condemn me,
or the labels you blew towards me,
blew, night wind cursing, blew
into nothingness.**

IV

A Dead Man's Pockets

Petty, trust snapped
a killed bug on a windshield.
Into the grave, folding, four-fold,
soot in the ears, on your eyelids,
and your poison almost run through.

You lost me long ago, your spell thinned out,
held no power or impact long ago but I thought
love existed between us still, thought
respect existed between us,
that we were more than a bowing down
to your sure-fire claims.

On my side it did.

I cared for you, wanted your dreams
to glow and be more than you ever imagined,
when all you wanted from me was
obedience to your cause.

As long as I kept my place,
just below your shoulder blades,
we would be fine.

Why can't you love?
Why the subterfuge madness
parading around as absolutism?
Why couldn't you acknowledge
my side, apologize for your
terrible accusations, bend a little,

suck in your puffed-up ego a little,
make room for someone other
than you, your way,
your branding rod?

There are more birds in the sky
than there has ever been,
more spark in my fountain than
I have felt for awhile.

Clarity is shameless,
a stream that rides, collides
with the rusty metal haul,
goes around it until it becomes one
with the waterfall, a cleansing continuum.

V

Touch

**The first touch was bitter,
tantamount to an attack, deception
from a vantage point
of spiritual superiority.**

**The second touch
was touching a tomb, still full of stench
though the flesh had rotted long ago -
just dry bones, barely
a full form.**

**The third touch
angered, like when a snake
snatches a fledgling, angry
at the innate brutality all around.**

**The fourth touch
was perfect, a release
from the swing-seat of darkness,
a blessed gift that came
at the first touch -
consciously cruel, compliant
to the sway of a lesser self.**

VI

Small Moon

A small moon melted
fleshed out a sure-footed sacrifice
but changed directions, too quickly
into the direction of a red star.
Then her heart was burned, crispy
and crumbling, no more a perfect circle,
drooping on one side, gravity became queen
of her false crescendo song.

Hiding her deformity in the dark red burn,
hoping no one could see her misshapened side,
which she tended to only in hidden rooms,
chanting for a cure, bandaging her bloodied side
to try and form again that perfect circle.

A small moon strained to keep her crust,
could not resist flinging curses from her
cavity craters as she went out, could not accept
her time had come, that in the end she never had
a compact core or a solid truth she could rely on.

VII

Ribbon

It is ok to still love you
though our personal love has been
caught by the fishing net,
drowned in the struggle.
It is ok to want you to be ok
and even thriving on a splendid mount,
trailing through the forest.

Though your axe came down
in a forced entanglement of muscle
and sinew, although you have failed me
and hurled enmity into my spine,
in a sharp take-me-down twist
that wanted to leave me maimed,
it is ok.

I am ok and I still love you,
not for what we were but
for who you are, now,
a person trying to
seize for yourself a homeland,
believing you are doing the right thing,
believing your betrayal was a necessary closure.

Closed now and I am ok
and I still love you
over here where we will never meet
in this life or any life again.

A Love Like No Other

**Your steady love has saved me,
one more dark wave rising and you
hold my hand, staying the course,
sharing with me your glowing inspiration,
giving me space to expose
my gruesome wounds within.
You do not flinch, or distract, but give me room
to writhe and cry out and then you look at me,
love in your eyes like God at my table,
offering water, acceptance,
and with that acceptance, untellable mercy.**

**Every night you read to me to keep me afloat,
to cup me in the flow of your voice
reminding me why we are here.
I think you will leave me, here
to implode in this over-a-year pit
of me climbing up to the edges, falling back in,
collapsing on bedrock, but you never do.
You stay and you are steady
and you are a miracle, patient, never
cursing your fate, never letting me go.**

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Heart and Mind; Our Poetry Archive; Winamop**

About the Author



Allison Grayhurst has been nominated six times for “Best of the Net” for her poems in 2024/2018/2017/2015.

She has over 1,400 poems published in more than 540 international journals and anthologies in Canada, United States, England, India, Ireland, China, Scotland, Wales, Italy, Bangladesh, Romania, Turkey, Austria, Zambia, Korea, New Zealand, Nepal, Kosovo, Colombia and Australia.

In 2018, her book *Sight at Zero*, was listed #34 on CBC’s “Your Ultimate Canadian Poetry List”.

In 2025, her work was translated into Italian and published in “International Web Post.” Eleven poems were translated into Portuguese and published on FaceBook.

In 2024, her work was translated into Italian and published in “Italia News Media – Alessandria Today”, in “Saturno Magazine” and in “Il Vischio e la Rosa” anthology, into Albanian in “Orfeu.AL” in “Gazeta Destinacioni”, and in

“Ciceroni”, and also into Korean in “Jeju The Pen Literature”.

In 2023, her work was translated in Korean and published in “Jnuri Magazine”.

In 2020, her work was translated into Chinese and published in "Rendition of International Poetry Quarterly" and in “Poetry Hall”.

She has been interviewed eleven times in print, as well as a TV interview, with translations of her interviews in Italian and Albanian, published in Italy, England and Kosovo.

Her book *Somewhere Falling* was published by Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book, in Vancouver in 1995.

Since then, she has published twenty-one other books of poetry and twelve collections with Edge Unlimited Publishing.

Prior to the publication of *Somewhere Falling* she had a poetry book published, *Common Dream*, and four chapbooks published by The Plowman.

Her poetry chapbook *The River is Blind* was published by Ottawa publisher above/ground press December 2012.

In 2014 her chapbook *Surrogate Dharma* was published by Kind of a Hurricane Press, Barometric Pressures Author Series.

In 2015, her book *No Raft – No Ocean* was published by Scars Publications.

Also, her book *Make the Wind* was published in 2016 by Scars Publications.

As well, her book *Trial and Witness – selected poems*, was published in 2016 by Creative Talents Unleashed (CTU Publishing Group).

Her book *Tadpoles Find the Sun* was published in 2020 by Cyberwit.

More recently, her book *Running, lightwave riding* was published by Cyberwit 2023.

Collaborating with Allison Grayhurst on the lyrics, Vancouver-based singer/songwriter/musician Diane Barbarash has transformed eight of Allison Grayhurst's poems into songs, creating a full album entitled *River – Songs from the poetry of Allison Grayhurst*, released 2017.

Allison Grayhurst is an ethical vegan for the animals. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay.

Some of the places her work has appeared in include Parabola (Alone & Together print issue summer 2012); SUFI Journal (Featured Poet in Issue #95, Sacred Space); Elephant Journal; Literary Orphans; Blue Fifth Review; The American Aesthetic; The Brooklyn Voice; Five2One; Agave Magazine; JuxtaProse Literary Magazine, Drunk Monkeys; Now Then Manchester; South Florida Arts Journal; Gris-Gris; The Muse – An International Journal of Poetry, Storm Cellar, morphrog (sister publication of Frogmore Papers); New Binary Press Anthology; Straylight Literary Magazine (print); Chicago Record Magazine, The Milo Review; Foliate Oak Literary Magazine; The Antigonish Review; Dalhousie Review; The New Quarterly; Wascana Review; Poetry Nottingham International; The Cape Rock; Ayris; Journal of Contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian Poetry (now called The Journal); The Toronto Quarterly; Fogged Clarity, Existere; Boston Poetry Magazine; Decanto; White Wall Review.

Contact the author:

allisongrayhurst@rogers.com

allisongrayhurst@gmail.com

www.allisongrayhurst.com



Quotes

“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader’s personal involvement. Grayhurst’s poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance,” *Kyp Harness*, legendary singer/songwriter, cartoonist, author of ‘Wigford Rememberies’ and ‘The Abandoned’, Nightwood Editions; www.kypharness.net

“Allison Grayhurst is the Queen of Catharsis. Her poems are like cathedrals witnessing and articulating in unflinching graphic detail the gritty angst and grief of life, while taking it to rare clarity, calm and comfort in an otherwise confusing world of deception, mediocrity and degradation. Allison Grayhurst takes the sludge of life, and with fearless sharpness of eye and heart she spins it free of maggots with the depth of honour and passion. Allison Grayhurst's work is haunting, majestic and cleansing, often leaving one breathless in the wake of its intelligence, hope, faith and love amidst the muck of life. Many of Allison Grayhurst's poems are simply masterpieces booming with thunderous insight begging to be in Bartlett's Quotations, lines such as "I drink necessity’s authority." Nothing is wishy-washy in the realm of Allison Grayhurst. Allison Grayhurst's work is sustaining, enriching, and deepening for the soul to read... a light of sanity in the world. As a poet, Allison Grayhurst

is a lighthouse of intelligent honour... indeed, intelligence rips through her work like white water," *Taylor Jane Green*, BA, RIHR, CHT, Registered Spiritual Psychotherapist and author of *Swan Wheeler: A North American Mythology and The Rise of Eros*.

"Grayhurst's rapturous outpouring of imagery makes her poems easily enjoyable ... Like a sear the poet seeks to fathom sensual and spiritual experience through the images of a dream," *Canadian Literature*.

"Her poems read like the journal entries of a mystic – perhaps that what they are. They are abstract and vivid, like a dreamy manifestation of soul. This is the best way, in prose, one can describe the music which is ... the poetry of Allison Grayhurst," *Blaise Wigglesworth*, *Oh! Magazine: Ryerson's Arts and Culture Voice*.

"Grayhurst's poetry is a translucent, ethereal dream in which words push through the fog, always searching, struggling, and reaching for the powerful soul at its heart. Her work is vibrant and shockingly original," *Beach Holme Publishers*.

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry appears visceral, not for the faint of heart, and moves forward with a dynamism, with a frenetic pulse. If you seek the truth, the physical blood and bones, then, by all means, open the world into which we were all born," *Anne Burke*, poet, regional representative for Alberta on the League of Canadian Poets' Council, and chair of the Feminist Caucus.

"Read at your peril. You will never look at this world in quite the same way again. Your eye will instinctively search the sky for eagles and scan the dark earth for the slightest movement of smallest ant, your heart will reach for tall mountains, bathe in the most intimate of passions and in the grain and grit of our

earth. Such is Allison Grayhurst. Such is her poetry," *Eric M. Vogt*, poet and author.

"Grayhurst is a great Canadian poet. All of Allison Grayhurst's poetry is original, sometimes startling, and more often than not, powerful. Anyone who loves modern poetry that does not follow the common path will find Grayhurst complex, insightful, and as good a poet as anyone writing in the world today. Grayhurst's poetry volumes are highly, highly recommended," *Tom Davis*, poet, novelist and educator.

"Biting into the clouds and bones of desire and devotion, love and grief, Allison Grayhurst basks the reader, with breathtaking eloquence, in an elixir of words. Like lace, the elegance is revealed by what isn't said. This is stunning poetry," *Angela Hryniuk*, author of 'no visual scars'.

"Allison Grayhurst is a poet whose work is characterized by startling imagery and uncompromising emotion, whose pieces have appeared in prestigious magazines. Lights, darks, colors, and passions intertwine throughout the pages of her work," *Louise E. Allin*, Literature and Language.

"When I read Allison Grayhurst's poetry, I am compelled by the intensity and strength of her spirituality. Her personal experience of God drives her poetry. With honesty and vulnerability, she fleshes out the profound mystery of knowing at once both the beauty and terror of God's love, both freedom and obedience, deep joy and sorrow, both being deeply rooted in but also apart from the world, and lastly, both life and death. Her poems undulate through these paradoxes with much feeling and often leave me breathless, shaken. Allison Grayhurst's poems are both beautiful and difficult to behold," *Anna Mark*, poet and teacher.

“The breath of roles covered in Allison Grayhurst’s poetry is exceptional. Even poems covering similar perspectives express subtle distinctions, distinctions which add depth to the poet’s larger themes. The cohesive psychology of the poet is clear, allowing for long reads and re-reads.” says author *Patrick Linsenmeyer*.

“Allison Grayhurst’s poetry has a tribal and timeless feeling, reminiscent of the Biblical commentary in Ecclesiastes,” *Cristina Deptula*, editor of Synchronized Chaos.

Books by Allison Grayhurst

Paperbacks with Edge Unlimited Publishing:

Book 1: Journey of the Awakening, 1997, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH6WO5Y; ISBN-10: 1478189339; ISBN-13: 978-1478189336

Book 2: The Longing to Be, 1998, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CH94ZNK; ISBN-10: 1478197684; ISBN-13: 978-1478197683

Book 3: Death and Other Possibilities, 2000, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHB8M0K; ISBN-10: 1478208163; ISBN-13: 978-1478208167

Book 4: Outliving the Inevitable, 2002, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHBYD1W; ISBN-10: 1478220295; ISBN-13: 978-1478220299

Book 5: Into My Mortal, 2004, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHFGOB0; ISBN-10: 147822858X; ISBN-13: 978-1478228585

Book 6: Red thread - Black thread, 2006, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHQOJFW; ISBN-10: 1478244186; ISBN-13: 978-1478244189

Book 7: The Many Lights of Eden, 2008, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHTR6IQ; ISBN-10: 1478249153; ISBN-13: 978-1478249153

Book 8: Pushing Through The Jelly Fire, 2010, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CHXZYOA; ISBN-10: 1478256567; ISBN-13: 978-1478256564

Book 9: The River is Blind, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CICVQ6K; ISBN-10: 1478280131; ISBN-13: 978-1478280132

Book 10: Seamless – A Collection of Love Poems, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIFTU0G; ISBN-10: 1479304816; ISBN-13: 978-1479304813

Book 11: If I Get There – Poems of Faith and Doubt, a collection, 2012, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00CIZQGI0; ISBN-10: 1479348740; ISBN-13: 978-1479348749

Book 12: Wallpaper Stars, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00DQBDZAW; ISBN-10: 1490499172; ISBN-13: 978-1490499178

Book 13: For Every Rain - a collection of early poems, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00E6Y47OQ; ISBN-10: 1491065656; ISBN-13: 978-1491065655

Book 14: Jumana and Perfect Love - two poetic prose pieces, 2013, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00E74B45A; ISBN-10: 1491081465; ISBN-13: 978-1491081464

Book 15: Walkways, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OR1VVH4; ISBN-10: 1502792133; ISBN-13: 978-1502792136

Book 16: As My Blindness Burns - three long poems, 2014, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00OS7HFZY; ISBN-10: 1502838265; ISBN-13: 978-1502838261

Book 17: Our Children Are Orchards – collected poems about animals, children and pregnancy, 2015, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B00TZDDP5K; ISBN-10: 1508582920 ISBN-13: 978-1508582922

Book 18: Fire and more, 2016, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B01BO7P7DM; ISBN-13: 978-1517327279; ISBN-10: 151732727X

Book 19: Currents- pastlife poems, 2016, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B01FV5EYTQ; ISBN-13: 978-1533311269; ISBN-10: 1533311269

Book 20: The Fault of Sages, 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B075JT6X6B; ISBN-13: 978-1544785646; ISBN-10: 154478564X

Book 21: Sight at Zero – selected poems (1988 to 2017), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B075Q7TDJK; ISBN-13: 978-1975894016; ISBN-10: 1975894014

Book 22: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 1 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZTQNX5; ISBN-13: 978-1978078833; ISBN-10: 1978078838

Book 23: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 2 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZSMPMB; ISBN-13: 978-1978106642; ISBN-10: 1978106645

Book 24: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 3 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZYQNHP; ISBN-13: 978-1978341272; ISBN-10: 197834127X

Book 25: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 4 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZYG3HV; ISBN-13: 978-1978378766; ISBN-10: 1978378769

Book 26: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - completed works from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 5 of 5), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B076ZYBVLB; ISBN-13: 978-1978476127; ISBN-10: 1978476124

Book 27: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst - Collections from 1988 to 2017 (Volume 6), 2017, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07713CLWC; ISBN-13: 978-1979275750; ISBN-10: 1979275750

Book 28: The Sculptures of Allison Grayhurst, 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B078TJTY37; ISBN-13: 978-1983534270; ISBN-10: 1983534277

Book 29: Animal Culture (rules of commitment), 2018, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07H1WRD5K; ISBN-13: 978-1719094962; ISBN-10: 1719094969

Book 30: If I Knew This Haunting, 2019, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ASIN: B07VQWS6PZ; ISBN-13: 9781082365133; ISBN-10: 1082365130

Book 31: Snapshots (excerpts of poems on images), 2019, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B07PQZV4P4; ISBN-13: 978-1090605115; ISBN-10: 1090605110

Book 32: Ways of Mercy, 2021, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ASIN: B08YQR3ZQC; ASIN: B08YTRYMWW; ISBN-13: 9798720154585

Book 33: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst – completed works for 2018 to 2021 (Volume 7), 2021, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ISBN: 9798740225913; ASIN: B0932GSD5C; ASIN: B093FW56NQ; ISBN: 9798773718482

Book 34: A Wish Alone, 2022, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798803463450; ASIN: B0B7GNMLW4; ISBN: 9798842289424; ASIN: B0B6XNQMF5

Book 35: Comments on The poetry of Allison Grayhurst (from 2011 to 2023), 2023, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798375947556; ASIN: B0BV49Y5B9

Book 36: The Light Given, 2023, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798378690404

Book 37: My Mother’s Sky, 2024, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798329439182; ASIN: B0D81NNRMJ; ISBN: 9798329462050

Book 38: Walkways – the poem, 2024, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798329544190; ASIN: B0D85PX45K; ISBN: 9798329630152

Book 39: New Wheel – five long poems, 2024, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798329652871; ASIN: B0D8C2698N; ISBN: 9798329741797

Book 40: The Sparrow Wars, 2025, Edge Unlimited Publishing; ISBN: 9798298279604

Book 41: The Poetry of Allison Grayhurst – completed works for 2022 to 2025 (Volume 8), 2025, Edge Unlimited Publishing: ISBN: 9798277384428

Paperbacks by other publishers:

Running, lightwave riding, 2023, Cyberwit; ISBN-10: 8196316127; ISBN-13: 978-8196316129; ISBN-10: 8182539870; ISBN-13: 978-8182539877

Tadpoles Find the Sun, 2020, Cyberwit; ISBN-10: 9390202558; ISBN-13: 978-9390202553

Trial and Witness, selected poems, 2016, Creative Talents Unleashed or CTU Publishing; ISBN-13: 978-0692702529; ISBN-10: 0692702520; ASIN: B01II9O63G

Make the Wind, 2016, Scars Publications; ISBN-10: 1530924995; ISBN-13: 978-1530924998

No Raft- No Ocean, 2015, Scars Publications; ISBN-10: 1518842046; ISBN-13: 978-1518842047

Common Dream, 1991, Edge Unlimited; ISBN-10: 0969542313

ISBN-13: 978-0969542315

Somewhere Falling, 1995, Beach Holme Publishers, a Porcepic Book; ISBN-10: 0888783655; ISBN-13: 978-0888783653

Chapbooks:

Surrogate Dharma, 2014, Barometric Pressures Author Series, Kind of a Hurricane Press

The River is Blind, 2012, above/ground press; ISBN-10: 1-897224-99-0; ISBN-13: 978-1-897224-99-1

Four chapbooks published under the pseudonym of Jocelyn Kain:

Jumana, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-36-9

Perfect Love, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-66-0

Before the Dawn, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 0-929002-11-3

Joshua's Shoulder, 1989, The Plowman; ISBN: 1-55072-025-2

"Allison Grayhurst's poetry combines the depth and dark intensity of Sylvia Plath, the layered complex imagery of Dylan Thomas and the philosophical insights of Soren Kierkegaard, taking the reader on a fearless journey through the human condition, delving with honesty into death, grief, loss, faith, commitment, motherhood, and erotic love. Grayhurst intertwines a potent spirituality throughout her work so that each poem is not simply a statement or observation, but a revelation that demands the reader's personal involvement. Grayhurst's poetic genius is profound and evident. Her voice is uniquely authentic, undeniable in its dignified vulnerability as it is in its significance," Kyp Harness, singer/songwriter, author.

**Allison Grayhurst has been nominated for "Best of the Net" six times. She has over 1,400 poems published in over 530 international journals, including translations of her work. She has 25 published books of poetry and 6 chapbooks. She is an ethical vegan and lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay;
www.allisongrayhurst.com**

